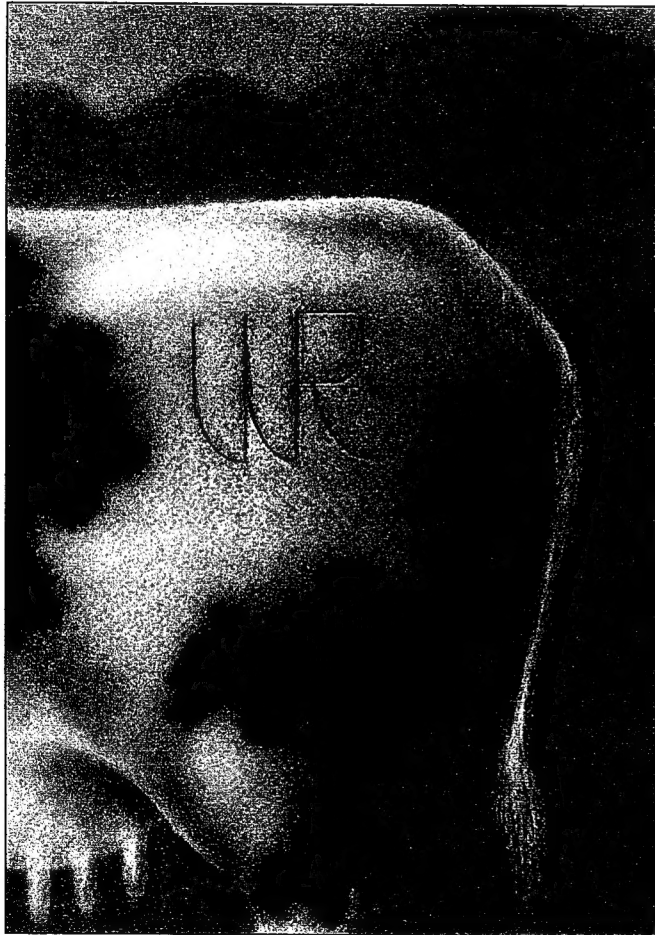


Wasatch Review

International

Volume 2 1993

Issue 1



A MORMON LITERARY JOURNAL

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The *Wasatch Review International* is a biannual literary journal dedicated to creative writing. Contributions from authors of any religion are welcome. Manuscripts (short stories, poetry, personal essays, drama, book reviews) must in some way explore the Mormon culture. Our aim is fine literature—not religious politics—and manuscripts should not be written to prove or disprove Church policies or doctrines.

Manuscripts should not exceed eight thousand words in length. Manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, and preferably be available on IBM floppy disk (WordPerfect, MicroSoft Word, DOS text file). Each manuscript should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Those whose manuscripts are published will receive two contributor's copies. Send manuscripts to *Wasatch Review International*, P.O. Box 1017, Orem, UT 84059.

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Publisher's Note

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Wasatch Review International*. It has some unique literature such as Henry Miles' biography on his great-grandfather, John Horne Miles. John Horne Miles came home from a mission engaged to three women, married two of them on the same day a short time later, and was reported to the sheriff for practicing polygamy by one of his wives the day after the marriage. However, unlike many biographies, this one isn't so much about the title character as it is about Henry's search for the truth. Dianne Black's "Ten Letters to Jenny" and Eugene England's "Monte Cristo" are beautiful journeys that capture life we have all lived but never noticed.

A change of subject. Among the editors of the *Wasatch Review International*, there have been disagreements about what Mormon literature is. In past issues and in this one there are stories and poems that don't appear to have any direct reference to Mormons and their culture. What place do they have in this publication? This question is material for an in-depth essay instead of only a paragraph and perhaps you may see that essay yet. However, most of the editors agree that the literature in question belongs in the publication because of *how* it said what it said. The literature belongs because Mormons' wrote it (and wrote it with artistry) without trying to be, or trying *not* to be, Mormon. The literature came from their hearts which cannot help but bear the marks (in some form or another) of their Mormoness.

I read a quote from C. S. Lewis the other day which said something like: the world does not need more literature *about* Christians, but more literature *by* Christians about other things. We at the *Wasatch Review International* do want literature (*good* literature) that directly explores the Mormon culture (sadly, we receive so little), but the literature by Mormons that doesn't deal directly with Mormon themes (and doesn't try *not* to be Mormon) often times gives the best look at a "Mormon" heart. To those of you who are so inclined, we ask you to develop your craft, write from your hearts, and then let us consider sharing it with our readers around the world.

TCA

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Editor's Note:

Mormon Literature: That Was Then, This Is Now, What Is Next?

Valerie Holladay

MY EARLIEST EXPERIENCE WITH MORMON LITERATURE WAS SATURDAY'S warrior and Charlie's Monument. They, along with Carol Lynn Pearson's poetry and James Talmage's works made up the majority of my preparation for my mission. As I studied I listened to the lyrics from My Turn on Earth since I was sick to death of Saturday's Warrior by then—my seminary class my senior year had played its various songs almost every day for our class devotionals.

When I read Gladys Farmer's *Elders and Sisters*, I recognized that it was *more* than what I had read to that point. It was a unique view of missionary life at a time when many people still saw missions through the eyes of a *Saturday's Warrior* glow. But Farmer showed the *problems* of missionaries, as well as their highlights. Farmer portrays a ZL who refuses to approve a baptism of young children for two baptism-hungry elders and a sister missionary who is "ruined" early in her mission because her companion sets her to work making visual aids for the Primary. An elder falls in love with a member and his companion saves him from

trouble. All eventually ends well; no one goes home early or in disgrace, and everyone's testimony is strengthened.

In addition to the fiction I read as a young Mormon, another form of Mormon literature had a great effect on me. Eugene England reminds us that the sermon should not be excluded from Mormon literature, using Joseph Smith's "King Follet Discourse" as an example. Just as I was anxiously waiting the time when I could submit my mission papers—my bishop insisted that the earliest I could submit my papers was two months before my 21st birthday—I heard Elder Neal Maxwell speak on "Patience," a talk that reminded me of the value in waiting, a talk that I would read and need again a year later as a disillusioned and unhappy missionary. When his talk appeared in the *Ensign*, I read it daily, committing certain passages to memory. Elder Maxwell handles language as an artisan, completely aware of its, of the relationship between the meaning of the word and its lyric quality.

Since my relationship with LDS literature during my mission was naturally confined to old, beat-up copies of the *Ensign*, I read many and came across Bruce Hafen's "On Dealing with Uncertainty" (a title reminiscent of Montaigne's essays). As I struggled to match up my mission expectations with certain mission realities, Elder Hafen's sermon comforted me. It was okay to feel uncertainties, even good to see problems "because people can't solve problems unless they are willing to acknowledge that a problem exists and yet also retain enough genuine loyalty to do something about it" (67).

It was in southern France, in the town of Perpignon, that I became aware of *Dialogue*, an independent Mormon literary journal (a companion's brother had sent her a copy). The first article I read was "The Obsessive-Compulsive Mormon," which reflected only too well the confusions of my mission experience where my worth was measured, I felt, according to my accomplishments.

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Within one month of my release from my mission, I found myself, much to my dismay, enrolled at BYU. I had sworn my entire mission that I would not go to BYU, and suddenly there I was, surrounded by Returned Missionaries who talked joyously of the "Best Two Years of their Lives." Somehow my mother and sister convinced me to see *It's a Miracle*, after which I swore off missionary plays. However, one day a friend invited me to, as he said, "a play about missionaries," and when I laughed at him, he said, "But I hear it's been banned in parts of Utah."

Whether or not that was true, he had my attention. That night I saw Bela Petsco's *Nothing Very Important* (the only night it played on campus, I understand, before it was relocated). I was amazed that someone had captured the essence of my mission so completely, so painfully. I went away purged. Petsco's short stories about Magyar's disillusionment with his missionary experiences may not seem uplifting to some readers. But it healed me to know that I was not alone in my mission experience. Most powerful is Magyar's confrontation with a Church leader who, in response to his questions about the emphasis on statistics, tells him, "But elder, baptizing is the name of the game." But it would be unfair to mention only that one example, when Petsco's portrayal of an elder's suicide is so terribly poignant, as is the seduction of a naive small-town Mormon boy who is sent home in disgrace by a humiliated mission president.

It ultimately took me about six years to get past the pain of my mission, a healing that was, ironically, helped greatly by two other plays that I read—yet another missionary play, Roger Elliott's *Fires of the Mind* and Tom Rogers' *Huebner*. Douglas Thayer's *Summer Fire*, a novel about a self-righteous pre-mission boy, showed me that people can change. From an essay from *Dialogue*, Richard Poll's "What the Church Means to People Like Me," I became aware that even though I asked difficult questions and had an unhappy mission experience, the Church had use for people like me.

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That Was Then

In fact, I had only been home a few years when I was asked to teach Gospel Doctrine in my BYU ward. I really didn't want to and my bishop didn't force me. He called me into his office just before sacrament meeting and asked if I would consider it and then just indicate to him with a nod or shake of my head as the meeting started.

Somehow the Spirit had communicated to me that this call was coming and I was prepared, although not happy about it. I took the call and spent all that week preparing for Sunday. I prepared several hours a day and all day Saturday. Each week thereafter, as I read the scriptures in preparation for my lesson I felt physically ill just remembering how pompously they had been quoted to me by the leaders I had served with on my mission. "For I the Lord am bound when you do what I say," one elder was fond of quoting as he exhorted us to obedience, which would assure our district of more convert baptisms. But I wasn't convinced since I had not been an obedient missionary and the Lord had blessed me with more baptisms than other, more obedient missionaries. Obviously personal worthiness of the missionary was not the Lord's sole criteria for granting baptisms.

As I taught, I began to feel comfortable, although I still occasionally felt sick before giving a lesson and often hoped I would even throw up and thus have a good excuse for not teaching.

After a second year of teaching, the feelings of nausea no longer accompanied the teaching.

My teaching of the Doctrine and Covenants led me to read Church history, especially the stories of the early Saints. I read about Ellis R. Shipp in *While Others Slept*. I liked Ellis because she had the nerve to marry a man that Brigham Young disapproved of and later, at President Young's suggestion, went to medical school in the East, leaving her family behind to care for themselves until she returned with greatly needed medical training.

Valerie Holladay

I also read about John D. Lee, adopted son of Brigham Young, and about Juanita Brooks whose telling of the Mountain Meadows Massacre made her an outcast among her fellow saints for twenty years. I read about Mary Goble Pay and Joseph Millet. One of my favorite stories came from Blaine Yorgasen's thesis on his polygamist grandfather James Yorgasen. James was reluctant to take a second wife but his wife insisted:

[Jame's] wife prepared a meal, Miss Tilby [the candidate] was invited to eat, her manners and demeanor were observed closely, and then as Yorgason waked out the door with the young lady, his wife Christina whistled a tune. They had agreed previously that one song that she gave her approval, another would mean that her vote was no. (Yorgansen 27)

My interest in Church history led me to read Maurine Whipple's *Giant Joshua*, a sort of *Gone with the Wind* epic of bigger-than-life characters and hotter than hell country.

Through Gene England's LDS literature class at BYU, I read Levi Peterson's first collection of short stories, *Canyons of Grace*. It was "The Christianizing of Coburn Heights" that led me to write my own first personal essay about my mother, who, although not as spiteful as Rendella Kranpitz, was certainly as puzzling. Like Rendella, my mother lived in a well-to-do conservative LDS neighborhood, dressed like a bag lady, and no doubt perplexed both members and leaders alike.

At first, Rendella's stake president is sure that the principles of "love and firmness" will work their magic on Rendella. But by the end of the story, he is counting the time until he is released.

At this time my family was still unaware of my mother's chemical imbalance, which led to her strange behavior—she liked to dress up as a clown and played the guitar or harmonica downtown. On Sunday the ward members were kind to her, but Mom still felt out of place among the gracious, soft-spoken, beautifully dressed women, some of whom

That Was Then

were wives of General Authorities. The stake itself was presided over by President Benson's son.

Sometime after I read Peterson's story, Eugene England assigned the class to write a paper about Mormon literature—or as an alternative, a personal essay. I was concurrently taking a personal history writing class and had written a short essay about my mother's buying dolls when I was little. I knew she had a unique story to tell, and although I didn't understand it, I felt a strange invitation to write it.

I was amazed at the power writing had to transform ugliness and chaos into grace and beauty. As I wrote, I was surprised at the things I wrote that I didn't plan to write. And I was surprised by what appeared in bits and pieces right up to my conclusion, in which I described a mother who is too talented, too busy, and too caring, one who directs all her love and energy to boxes of old, secondhand dolls.

Through my own writing, I began to see Mormon letters in a new light—not only for what it does for the reader, but what it does for the writer. It clarifies, it heals, it bonds the writer with others who share the experience of healing.

As a Mormon writer I am aware of the conflict of writing about experiences that are painful and may not show my church or church leaders in a completely positive light, but I do believe that good Mormon literature will come from a foundation of faith. Perhaps I am being idealistic to think that honesty, forgiveness, faith, and compassion will create a better literature, although I understand that not all good people are great writers and some writers, like Hollywood actors, can completely submerge their personal lifestyle in a very different outward appearance. A sinner can portray a saint, an unfaithful husband can portray a faithful husband, an angry woman can portray one completely at peace. Likewise, perhaps a writer full of pain and anger may be able to write a story of peace and a writer who does not forgive may write a story of forgiveness.

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Valerie Holladay

I remember Bruce Hafen's words and can apply them to the writer of Mormon literature. The writer of good Mormon fiction will "be honest enough and courageous enough to face whatever uncertainties we may encounter, try to understand them, and then do something about them" (67), always remembering that we cannot "solve problems unless [we] are willing to acknowledge that a problem exists and yet also retain enough genuine loyalty to do something about it" (67).

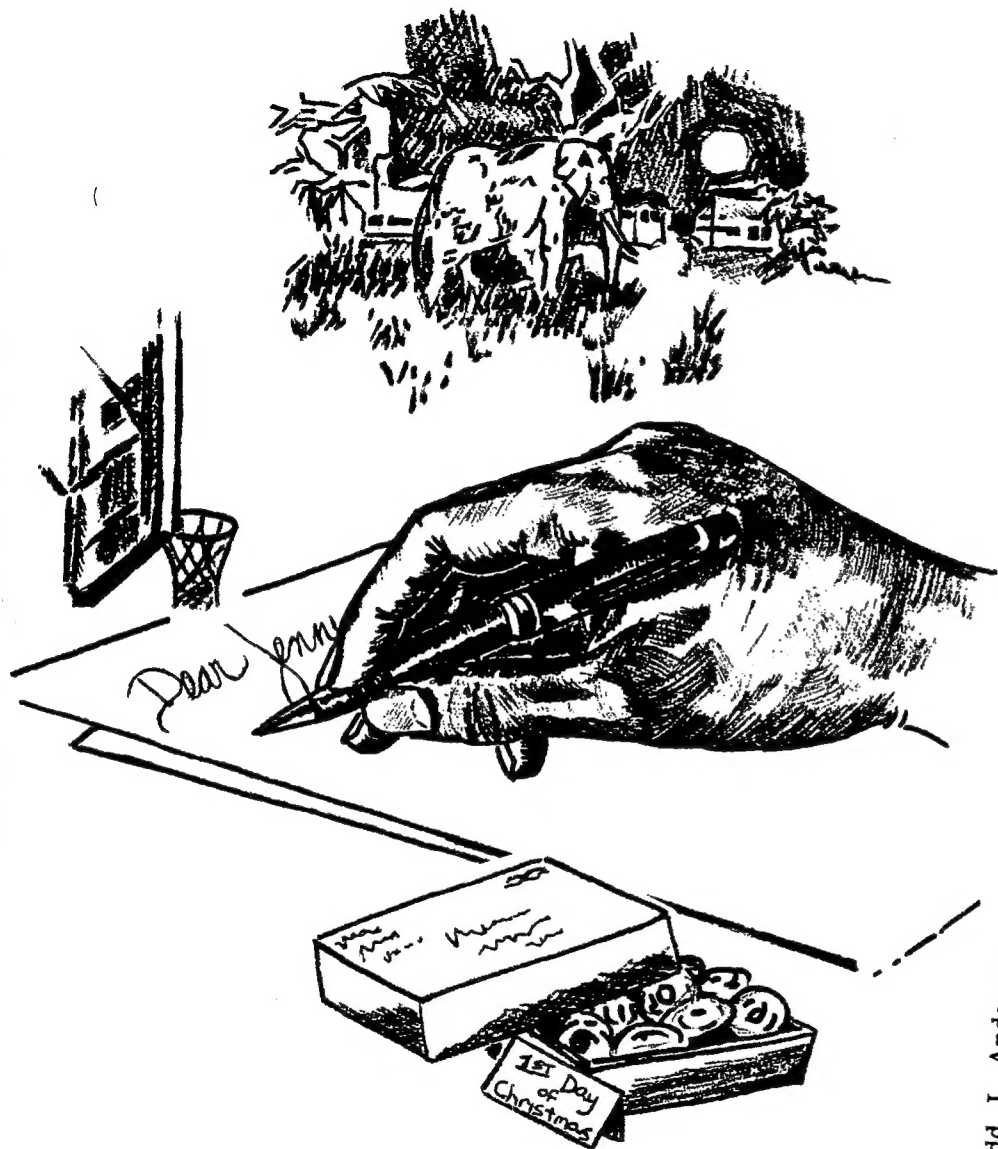
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Todd J. Anderson

Ten Letters to Jenny

Dianne M. Black

July 27, 1988

Dear Jenny,

The basketball court is silent now. I expected it, but expectations never are reality. There are no flattened imitation leather balls lying on the court. No Shirts against Skins. No smelly T-shirts and shoes. Nothing left but cleanness and silence and my own voice (why just one voice, why not twenty?) calling for it all to come back.

But nothing ever comes back. I'm told everything has its season. Bert can no longer sing soprano—what a pity. Such a beautiful, pure voice. But he has only one voice and it changed.

I think I'm a mystery to myself. I don't like the silence, yet I feel the insanity of noise. And if the basketball court is silent, the house certainly isn't. Day after day, week after week, they come to fill up the house and the beds. Except Russ, who arrived unannounced last night and slept in the driveway. When Jack backed out in the morning, he didn't even stop. He said he didn't think it unusual to see someone he didn't recognize hopping around in a sleeping bag in the driveway. He accepts it all as just part of the menage around here.

Eggs and bacon, washing, cleaning, and my cursed Calvinistic ethic brings them back. Did you know that I invented a meeting to go to and left them all—and didn't even care about the rightness of doing such a thing? It didn't matter. They come anyway, and then they go. They don't talk of Michelangelo. They talk noise—of babies and sickness and lost opportunities. They talk of cars and boats and snowmobiles. They talk of everything and mean nothing by it.

Now that Ted is gone for two years, we're relearning to turn off the lights and to lock the doors at night.

How many nearly empty milk cartons are in your fridge today?

Love,

Ann

September 1, 1988

Dear Jenny,

Don't worry.

I meant nothing by the last letter.

Harry means something. Even though he's strictly a meat and potatoes and one-cheese-enchilada man, he means something. He tells me that buttresses grow in anticipation of future storms. He tells me of dragging bears out of dens. He shows me ants with no bodies (he calls them life's "ant-tithesis") and mopane trees barked by elephants. He reads to me about aardvark teeth and the second law of thermodynamics. He talks about individual distance and territory when he sees starlings on the line. Would you believe it? He calls himself the Salieri of barbershop, but he sings "I Need Thee Every Hour" to me and that's not barbershop. He even changes the Bible to suit him. He says to me, "Intreat me not to leave thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and when thou diest, I will

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die." He gets away with this schmaltz because he knows I'm not ready to die.

Still, I like him. Except when he leaves. Pillows have no warmth, so I like him a little less then. He goes off to Portugal and leaves me here. When he got sick last time, I said it served him right. But I cried. I loved it when he came home and told me how hard it would be alone.

Yesterday, I watched a spider do gymnastics: climbing and free-fall-ing, bobbing up and down on his life rope. When I think of Harry, I think I know about life ropes.

The beets are drizzling red juice all over the stove.

I sent the brass owls you liked.

Love,

Ann

November 6, 1988

Dear Jenny,

I've decided that I have the wrong name. To be somebody at all, I need a name with at least three syllables—you know, something like professional ball players carry. Sleepy Floyd or Pervis Short. Or the longer Johnny Unitas. Or Roman Gabriel. Or the stretched out Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and that placekicker whose name I can't begin to spell. There's something that rings in these names, something that rolls off the tongue with grace and elegance. Something of the mystique. But then, what does a raspberry picker do with a chime of a name? Two syllables. Like Bart Starr, right?

I went to John's funeral yesterday. For years he made the lives of his wife and children miserable. I wonder if his son really knew how much he said in the eulogy when he said of his father, "He had a heart that had

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Dianne M. Black

an unmeasurable and an unspecified quality." I think I'd like someone to say of me, "She was happy, and she knew it."

Love,

Ann

December 23, 1988

Dear Jenny,

The box of homemade cookies arrived with its bold sign: THE FIRST DAY OF CHRISTMAS. The next night, we got THE SECOND DAY. On the following night, THE THIRD DAY. We waited for THE FOURTH DAY with great anticipation. It never came. Nor did THE FIFTH.

Snow covers everything here. There is nowhere left to push it. (Where do ski resorts haul their excess snow? To the valleys?) All this snow reminds me of a past winter when the children were still home. They bundled up and trespassed out onto the new snow. I bundled up, stayed inside, and looked at it all—and we all had a good time. They didn't miss me when they were outside and I just looked on. I look out now and miss them.

Last June, when it was still warm, three white doves perched on the roof above the front door. In the pink twilight, they were the only white things. They were ghostly, and I shivered. Like Nebuchadnezzar, I wanted an interpretation, but I didn't get one. I couldn't pay for it.

Merry Christmas to all of you.

Love,

Ann

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January 15, 1989

Dear Jenny,

Dad must be very sick. He refuses to read—even Zane Grey. He refuses to talk about it. He's hurt and he must wonder what purpose all this serves.

I can't help him much. I can't figure it out. It makes no sense. It's like driving down the road and seeing a man topple off his bicycle. Or playing soccer in the gravel with bare feet. Or eating termites and spitting out the wings. Or having a one-candle dinner. Or seeing a bird that looks like a man.

He's not ready to die. Not like Harry's mother who's been sick for years. Not like Veteran, the one-legged, no-tail-feathered finch who showed up at the feeder for only two days.

He wants to live and I want it to be the same as it always has been—but then I want a lot of things. I still want to laugh when students from Florida come to my house and say foolish things like, "Look at the little farm children." I want to plant my garden every spring because a dream I had said to me that only those who grow living things are sane. I want to scold Aunt Sybil when she comes to my house and refuses to eat anything but cooked oatmeal with honey and sweet and sour chicken wings. I want to hear the birds who impetuously begin to sing in January. I want to sing back, to tell them to fly away.

I want him to live.

Wish us well.

Love,

Ann

P.S. When I die I want Joan to play Bach loud enough to reach me.

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Dianne M. Black

April 2, 1989

Dear Jenny,

I walked the basketball court yesterday. I tried to make a few baskets. There are still no Shirts against Skins, no imitation basketballs, no voices to crush the air with the glory of the game. It is silent; it has served its purpose.

I am beginning to ask if Dad has served his purpose. He may be wondering, too. He is still very ill. He gets the shakes from the platelets they feed into him—shakes that only injections can soothe.

Some people have turkey sandwiches, some have Porsches. I think I have a spiritual sag. Wouldn't it be easier if we could simply unzip some of our baggage DNA to become powerful spiritual beings?

DNA or no, I think you somehow have it all worked out.

Love,

Ann

P.S. I'll tell you about *Spoof* later.

May 21, 1989

Dear Jenny,

Did you get the root beer off the ceiling?

The reunion was a success, no?

On the way home, we camped at El Morro. I spent the night awake, talking to a kangaroo rat. It was a little like talking to Roberta.

I read "Tithonus" yesterday—about that poor misguided wretch who forgot to plan for both immortality *and* youth and who suffered because of it. Things like this worry me because I forget to plan half the time.

I must tell you that, despite his paralysis, Wesley is still drawing. His latest—a delicate, pen-stippled unicorn—rises out of childhood fantasies. His wife says it's amazing what a little twitch of a muscle can ac-

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complish. What a picture these two made at the birth of their daughter: she in full labor, rushing *him* into the hospital in a wheelchair.

Well now. That's not the only birth to be made something of. I didn't believe Bert for a minute when he came to tell me that our calf was having a calf. It was ludicrous. I mean, our calf weighed only 600 pounds and we had beef in mind, not ranching.

But, since what we got was two calves, we added three pigs—Napoleon, Squealer, and Snowball, a horse named Huggy Winkie Doggie, a new corral, Cat Ballou (an indifferent silver tabby who has grown to hate Harry), an acre of hay, and our usual large garden.

Until recently, their pride in their own produce kept Harry's folks from taking fruits and vegetables home from our garden. Not so now. Have we finally hit the mark? I guess, like Bert's voice, things change.

Love,

Ann

June 28, 1989

Dear Jenny,

Spoof is a different kind of a game. *Hearts* is just plain dirty, *Rook* can only be played by the not-so-serious, and *Trivial Pursuit* by the serious; but *Spoof* has its basis in deception. Ed's cherubic expression never gives him away. Harry always sounds like he's lying (a clever strategy and it works well for him). Liz is simple and straightforward and, unfortunately for me, understated to the point of sincerity. Pam's giggles distract. And Don knows so much that I can't doubt him. I always lose because I can't tell who's lying. The moral of the story? Someone asked me once if there was a moral to *Alice in Wonderland*. I didn't know. I don't know if there is in my *Spoof* story. If there is, you'll have to find it.

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Joan's new boarder, Sally, is a one-woman demolition squad. A week ago, she slammed her books on another student's head when he disagreed with her about a particular football team. Yesterday, she threw water on a young man who questioned her femininity. She even attacked Harry because he complimented her on how she looked in her new pants. Joan's worried.

The cat had five kittens, bless her heart.

Love,
Ann

August 8, 1989

Dear Jenny,

Harry pulled a good one on me the other day. He let me use the rigged up garbage-can shower at the cabin before he told me that the garbage can had been used at one time for bear bait. Have you seen bear bait? Or worse still, have you smelled it?

I have decided that Lucy is the epitome of the "Are you thirsty?" mindset. Let me explain. Some years ago, a young man (I've forgotten his name) lectured on one of the misunderstandings between men and women: "Men," he claimed, "always say what they mean. Women take a more oblique course." He said that after a particularly fine night of lecturing, he and his wife were on their way home, when she asked him as they passed McDonald's, "Are you thirsty?" He replied, "No," and kept driving. He noticed that as they got closer and closer to home, she became more and more indignant and finally refused to talk to him. When he stopped the car in the driveway, he asked her, "OK, just what in the world is wrong now?" She answered that she had "never in all her life met such an insensitive, inconsiderate, unkind, unthoughtful (he placed

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heavy emphasis on a string of adjectives much longer than I have written here) boor."

"What did I do?" he asked.

"When I asked if you were thirsty, why didn't you stop?" she replied angrily.

"I wasn't thirsty," he said.

"But I was," she said.

Actually, I thought Lucy the only one I knew who fell victim to being thirsty. I was wrong. Shortly after I told Dick the story, he came over to our house on a warm Saturday morning laughing. He said his wife asked him, "Dick, don't you think the garage is dirty?" But I can't pick on Lucy and Joan without admitting that I asked Harry if he wouldn't like some "do"-nuts.

Last week, when I didn't cook supper for two nights because Harry and I were frantically running around trying to accomplish in eighteen hours what couldn't be done in twenty-four, Harry's mother asked coolly, "If you didn't want to cook for your husband, why did you get married?"

You were right. Ted must be doing well. He asked for peanut butter and long johns. Yes, Ted's last fling before leaving was Lake Powell. He won the bet: he stayed on the torpedo longer than any of the rest of us. Somehow he knew he could. He'll need that confidence.

Poor Ed didn't fare so well. He dropped a 10-pound block of ice on his big toe, fell out of the canoe, got his ski rope caught in the prop, and misplaced his boat. We asked him to go with us next time. He says he's thinking it over.

Harry's knees are still hanging in there after 12 years of jogging. So much for my prophecies.

Laura not only cleaned my cluttered house for me Tuesday, she left us a \$20 bill to go out to supper. Mothering isn't bad.

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The other day, my granddaughter asked me if water floats.
How's the moving coming?

Love,
Ann

October 12, 1989

Dear Jenny,

It's been years, but Ladysmith Black Mombazo brought it all back last night. All the music, dance; all the beat. The sun at Mana Pools, orange by the long dry season of dust. The frangipani and the bougainvillea. The compounds with all the cramped houses made of mud, grass, and tin. The busloads of people going nowhere in particular and the women with fifty pounds of bagged mealies on their heads. The snake in the bamboo (was it a black mamba? I don't remember). The *lechwe*, the crocs, the hippos, and the go-away bird that Lenny used to imitate so well. The elephants in the mist at the salt lick at Ngorongoro. Even the cow's head in a cardboard box.

How does it happen that fifteen years ago can come back in a night? Do you remember I wrote you about Dr. Machili's death and how the police had misplaced his body? How the kids were spooked by it all when we moved into Machili's apartment? How they thought the hyena rattling in the garbage can was his ghost?

And the lion the king of the beasts? Nonsense. That brawny ball of mane sits around most of the time and lets the lionesses do his work. Give me a warthog any day. A pig, for heaven's sake! I think it was the defiance in her eye, the spirit in her flag of a tail. When that flag was up, her little ones followed closely behind.

How I wish I had Charles back to do my cleaning. No. I guess I don't. I just remembered how upset Harry was when Charlie scrubbed Harry's baseball mitt and his leather shoes and hung them out to dry. I had to go upstairs so Harry wouldn't catch me laughing.

With our family, and only two sisters and their children, our Sunday meetings there were small and so quiet. We prepared lessons and talks knowing that everyone would be listening. There's something frightening in that.

What I remember most was the irrevocableness of some decisions. I had chosen to go and once there, despite my homesickness, I had to stay. I stayed because I had made a greater choice to stay with Harry. I guess my acceptance of the situation showed when I began to wash away some of the beetles from the beans.

It's four o'clock. These "remember when" stories won't clean the house and I *don't* have Charles.

Only four kittens this time. Remind me to tell you about the resurrected goose.

Love,
Ann

Lines for Morning / Ellen Kartchner

The horizon is the lightest blue
that is green

Only a bar of light moves
over softened bodies in sleep

Bird song—
an ornamental wind,
powders leaves with light

A train steadily mates the hour to the landscape
Beasts in the field watch the engine, the cars,
and then their absence

Solitude lives in the farthest trees,
that deepest green that is blue
The sun an entirely white thing

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Ode to Basil / Ellen Kartchner

Light divides
even your sundermost greens,
its laws
illuminating

your bounds in this world.

Cold air
pours salt in
from the window.

You furl
against
that wind.

You are so composed
of light—
how can we
eat you for lunch
with tomatoes,
a little oil,
fresh french bread.

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The Trial of John Horne Miles

Henry Landon Miles

JOHN HORNE MILES FASCINATED ME AND THAT PERTURBED MY DAD, WHO detested people who spoke with an English accent. In 1971 I was on vacation from my job in Ecuador when our conversation turned to John Horne Miles, my great-grandad. "Why are you so interested in that old fool?" Dad said. He kinked the space between his eyebrows and poked at me with his right thumb.

"He must've been the most educated person around in those days," I said. "Great-Aunt Emily Sleight said he graduated from Eaton College." Dad's thumb hit my ribs. Recalling that quirk of his, I backed out of his reach before he could jab me again. "He was a school teacher and knew some foreign languages."

"I don't think he went past high school," Dad said. "They could teach with a high school diploma in those days. Aunt Emily made up stuff. It's mostly Bull Durham."

I felt like stepping on the narrow toes of his black western boots. "Well, it took guts to become a Mormon in the 1870s, and we know that much of his story happened," I said, watching his right thumb.

"When I was a kid," Dad said, sliding his western hat back by the brim, "a guy asked me if I was related to Paddy Miles, that's what they called him. I said he was my granpa. He said Paddy was the meanest sumbitchen teacher he ever saw, beat up the kids. I never said he was my granpa again. I'd say 'Hell no, never heard of Paddy Miles.'" Dad laughed and tucked in the plaid shirt with arrows at the ends of the pockets. Mom had fashioned it after one worn by a cowboy in a Chesterfield cigarette ad. Dad caught me in the ribs with his thumb again.

"Keep your damn thumb out of my ribs," I said. "You're a chip off old Paddy's block."

Dad laughed, stepped forward, and put his arm around my shoulder and squeezed me.

"Did you ever see Paddy?" I said.

"One day he came to Central School in Blackfoot to talk shop with the teachers. Get me? Before he left he went into the sixth grade room and kissed your Uncle Spence on the forehead in front of the kids. Made Spence mad as hell," Dad laughed. "Spence was still cussing when he got home that afternoon."

Back in Quito one evening in about 1972, I sat with my feet on the brick base of the fireplace reading *Essentials of Church History* and saw the name John H. Miles, appear on the page. The name stopped me; I read it twice, then began at the top of the paragraph again. It said:

Another cause of agitation and one that went a long way towards congressional action of the severest nature against the practice of plural marriage was the case of John H. Miles. This case ran a course of about three years, having been carried before the supreme court of the United States. Miles was arrested in October 1878, on complaint of Caroline Owen Miles, his wife. She accused Miles of having married Emily Spencer of St. George, on the same day, and a little before her own ceremony was performed.

My great-aunt Emily Sleight had got it right! It was in a book. Caroline really did exist. Paddy had been a polygamist. He'd had a trial. I ran upstairs to my wife, who was reading in bed with her hair and a towel coiled into a pointed turban. "Look!," I said.

I held the book over the bed in front of Carol's face, and, with my fingernail, I underlined the name "John H. Miles" on the page.

Five years later, at a cocktail party in Asunción, I was making conversation with an attaché from the British Embassy. "A relative says my great-grandfather went to Eaton College," I said, envisioning buildings with ivy and turrets but knowing nothing about it except that Emily Sleight had spelled it E-a-t-o-n. "Would they have records back to the 1860s?"

The attaché put his Scotch and water on a coaster on the coffee table in front of us and said, "Eton keeps good records, even has a genealogist to handle inquiries. I'll phone you the address."

A few days later, I put a letter in the mail pouch to London with a check for \$20.00, just in case there was a fee for research and copying. My letter asked for records of John Horne Miles who had attended Eaton College between 1865 and 1870. The genealogist responded promptly. She had searched the records at Eton from 1860 to 1875 and had not found John Horne Miles. "We consider our records complete for that period," she wrote. "We had to reconstruct our records for an earlier time because of a fire, but we have the originals from 1860 to 1875. If you have evidence that John Horne Miles attended Eton, we would appreciate a copy."

The genealogist went on to say my case was a common one; many people say their English relatives attended Eton College so they can bask in its prestige. There would be no charge for her services, since she had not exceeded the time allotted per request. Furthermore, it wasn't clear who the check was for since it was made out to an *Eaton College*. I looked

at the check she had returned to me and became aware that I had misspelled the name of *Eton* College ever since I had read Emily Sleight's reference to it. I remember standing in the doorway of our house in Asuncion with the genealogist's letter in one hand and my returned check in the other looking out at the row of newly planted banana trees. I felt like an ass. Not only had he not attended Eton, Emily Sleight couldn't even spell Eton correctly.

In the summer of 1990, almost two years after Dad died, his spunky younger sister Mary Jane Adams, then seventy-five, bussed up from Los Angeles to Blackfoot to be with my mother, who was still grieving. Some years before, a surgeon had removed an ovarian cancer from Aunt Mary Jane and then recommended a period of chemotherapy. "Phooey on you," Aunt Mary Jane said. "I've seen what that stuff does. I'm going to live 'til I die, not vomit up my guts for months and then die." She angered the doctors, went on one vacation after another, got bored, settled down, and kept right on living.

I had seen Aunt Mary Jane at Dad's funeral in 1988 and once twenty years before. My wife, Carol, and I were anxious to tape her history. We began with the first event she could remember, and after an hour of meandering in memories, Aunt Mary Jane surprised us. She had actually met Paddy Miles. He had been drafting blueprints for the Union Pacific Railroad and living in Pocatello, Idaho. My grandmother had stopped to visit Paddy and his wife, Emily Spencer Miles; Grandmother had Aunt Mary Jane with her. Before they entered the house, Grandmother instructed Aunt Mary Jane one last time how to act around Paddy. "Remember," she said, "you sit on a chair, keep your mouth shut, and act like a lady." At age five, Aunt Mary Jane learned that you didn't fool around with Paddy Miles.

Aunt Mary Jane was impressed by the house. It was plain and clean. She imagined it was like a captain's quarters aboard ship. Formal. No pictures, no plants, no knickknacks like her aunts' houses had. Grandmother talked with Paddy; Mary Jane sat stiffly on the edge of her chair; Great-Grandmother Emily didn't say a word.

Aunt Mary Jane was an adult the next time she met Emily Spencer Miles, and she was excited about getting the story of Paddy and his wife Emily firsthand. She went to Salt Lake City where Emily Spencer, now widowed, lived with her daughter Emily Sleight and son-in-law. Mary Jane followed Grandma Emily around the house like Boswell behind Johnson, notebook and pen in hand. Emily Spencer Miles answered, "Yes," "No," or, "I don't know," all the day long.

The next week, Aunt Mary Jane said to her mother, "I spent an entire day with Grandma Emily, and she didn't say anything, didn't get into a conversation all day. Is she senile?"

"She's always been like that," her mother said. "You'd have to stare at her all day to see whether she was dead or alive. That's just Emily."

A few days later, Carol and I took Aunt Mary Jane to Missoula to visit Aunt LaRue, my dad's oldest sister. LaRue showed us a calling card Paddy had given to my grandfather around 1917; it measures 2.5" x 4.5" and resembles a resume.

[front]

JOHN H. MILES

TEACHER,

English, mathematics, mechanic arts, etc.

Idaho life diploma, Utah state certificate, etc.

Sabbath School teacher, M.I.A. worker, etc.

SHELLEY P.O., R.F.D. No. 1

Vacation Address {Paradise Valley, Bingham Co., } Idaho June, July, August
{Soda Springs, P.O., Bannock Co.}

Henry Landon Miles

BINGHAM CO., IDAHO

(over)

for Jn. S. Miles Esq.

[back]

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Four years, Hughs Seminary, London.

Six years, Seymour College, London. Rhetoric, Latin, Literature, French, German, History, Science, Civics, Mathematics, Pedagogy, Mechanic Arts, etc.

Graduate, at head of class, College of Preceptors.

Traveller, five years, U.S., Europe, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, China, and South America.

Mechanic, two and half years, Saint George Temple, Utah.

Missionary, two and half years, Great Britain.

Student, under Dr. Karl G. Maeser and Dr. James E.

Talmage, Brigham Young Academy, Provo, Utah.

Prin, four years, Bear Lake Stake Academy, Paris, Ida.

Prin, one year, Summit Stake Academy, Coalville, Utah.

Supt Public Instruction, 1901/02, Bear Lake Co. Idaho.

Prin of Academies, High and Graded Schools, Ida, Utah, Wyo

Mechanic, Wood, Metal, Leather, Canvas, etc.

Principal, Goshen Schools. (1915 & 1916)

P.O. Shelley, R.F.D. No. 1, Bingham Co., Idaho.

I wondered if Dad had ever seen one of these cards. Dad always noticed when people "put on the dog," as he called it. He'd have scorned the detailed lists followed by "etc." saying, "If you have certificates for teaching in Utah and Idaho, what other certificates would a teacher have?" He would have counted the ten subjects Paddy had studied in secondary school—literature to mechanical arts, followed by "etc."—

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and said, "Paddy listed every damn subject ever taught and then had the gall to add etc."

Dad would have read "Sabbath School teacher" and "M.I.A. worker" and the "etc." and smiled, "Maybe Paddy also was a bishop incognito?" Paddy's five years as a "traveller" consisted of three years as a sailor and two years as a missionary. I can see Dad giving the card to Mom to file in the cupboard behind the standing dinner plates, saying with a smirk, "Paddy was *humble*."

One night in September, 1992, in the BYU library, I searched the long, gray drawers of microfilms for the *Deseret News* 1878-79, gave up, and went to the information desk. A researcher found the film and threaded the roll into a machine. I turned the handle, watched newspaper pages blur by, stopped every few turns to check the date at the top, and turned on and on. With great anticipation I reached October 1878. I turned the handle slower until I was watching each page as the film approached the 25th, the date of Paddy's arrest.

The *Deseret News* was published each Wednesday, and page 617, October 30, 1878, caught my eye. Under the caption "Examination," I read that John Miles had married on the 24th of October and been arrested the very next day at the request of Edward O. Brand and charged with bigamy. John was examined from seven until eight that evening and let out on \$1500 bond with A. M. Cannon and Andrew Burt as sureties.

I felt like Columbus sighting El Salvador in 1492 or Jack Anderson following the trickle to Watergate as I read about Paddy's week-long examination. I made a photocopy of it, then cranked the film to the following May and his week-long trial. Next morning I began typing: I ended with thirty-two pages, single spaced. The *Deseret News* account referred to the *Salt Lake Daily Herald* and *Salt Lake Tribune*. I went back to the library and read those versions of the trial too.

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The latter versions seemed more detailed, maybe because they published daily instead of weekly. The *Deseret News* was pro-Mormon and noncontentious, but snide; the *Tribune* disparaged polygamy and Mormonism in articles and played with language; the *Herald* was openly feisty, with clever captions about the federal government imposing its will on the Utah territory, captions like these:

MILES MATRIMONY. The Prosecution Has Grabbed and Got Nothing. A Weak Case Weakly Conducted.

THE POLYGAMY CASE. A Great Many Questions Asked, But Few Facts Elicited.

ANOTHER DOSE. The Miles Bigamy Investigation Winding Its Slow Length Along.

The investigation tried to settle the question of whether John Miles married Emily Spencer before he married Caroline Owen. The attorney called an Endowment House worker to get the records. The worker said he wrote names on a piece of paper and his duty ended there. He believed the names were later entered into a record book, but he said he didn't know who kept the book.

When asked if he had performed the marriage, Elder Joseph F. Smith said, "I swear to my recollection, I didn't marry John and Emily. But I won't swear I didn't marry them. I simply don't remember."

To the same question, Elder Daniel H. Wells said, "I won't say I didn't marry Miles and Spencer or that I did. I marry so many I can't state positively."

"Peruse the record book," the interrogator said.

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"Give me the book and I will," said Elder Wells.

I was reminded of President Ronald Reagan's answers to the Iran Contra investigator.

The examination ended October 31st in a decision to try John Horne Miles for bigamy. The next day an interview with Caroline Owen took up two columns in the *Tribune*. The *Tribune* said that Caroline Teresa Horne Maile Owen was the only child of respectable parents named Maile. Her parents died in her early childhood, and her uncle and aunt named Owen adopted her and reared her to "be a lady." They educated Miss Owen in the best schools and finished her education on the Continent. Miss Owen's uncle was high constable of Westminster while John Horne Miles's father was a tradesman. Miles operated a pub, which put him in a lower social class than Miss Owen's uncle.

Business brought the two families together, and over the years, the two children fell in love. Miss Owen's guardians felt she could do better, but she was devotedly attached to John and wouldn't heed them. The high constable, not to be obdurate, accepted the situation. Miles was steady in his habits, fairly educated, showed character enough to get along in the world, and had fair prospects. However, Miss Owen's aunt never accepted the match.

Six or seven years ago, the *Tribune* reported, Miles had apprenticed as a midshipman and served three years on an Australian line of steamers; through their letters, John and Caroline kept up their tender relationship. But on his last visit to Melbourne, the roving midshipman converted to Mormonism, and this change to Saintship altered his life. Instead of returning home with his vessel, he came to Utah and found his way to St. George. He lived there two years, growing in the spirit and becoming an elder. He was called on a mission to England and, obeying the Lord's servants, repaired to his native isle.

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Miles, as a Mormon elder, presented himself at Miss Owen's house where Caroline welcomed him with all her heart, strange religion and all. During his two-year mission, he paid assiduous court to the lady. The widowed aunt forbade the priest lover her home and entreated the infatuated girl to cast aside this vulgar chap and have some regard for her position in life. Despite the warnings, Miss Owen met Miles at other places, attended meetings of the Mormon Church and finally, joined John's church to gratify him.

Miles told Miss Owen that away off in the Lord's kingdom there were two young Saintesses who had also offered their maiden hearts to him.

"Why, that's polygamy!" exclaimed the young convert. "You surely don't love those young hussies and also profess love for me."

He admitted that they had awakened a tender feeling, but it was only slight compared with the devotion he felt for his English true love; and at her request, he would tear their image from his breast and devote himself solely and faithfully to the mistress of his first affections. The alarmed girl inquired if plural marriage was much practiced by the people of God. He told her only in exceptional cases. Plural marriage was taught but few practiced it.

Love prevailed and the girl bade her aunt adieu and boarded the ship *Wyoming* at Liverpool amidst a group of 600 Mormon immigrants with Elder Miles, his stepmother, and four children from her family circle. During the voyage to New York, the idea of the two Spencer girls haunted Caroline's imagination, but whenever she mentioned her fears to her devoted, he would renew his promise to put the two sisters away and have no further dealings with them.

The party reached Salt Lake City, and Miss Owen lodged at the home of Angus Cannon. In two days the Spencer sisters called at her door.

Tribune Reporter: "Did you see them?"

Miss Owen: "They introduced themselves."

Tribune Reporter: "How were you impressed with their manners and appearance?"

Miss Owen: "They are brown, squint-eyed things, coarse as can be, and totally ignorant. I understand they work out in the fields. I could no more associate with them than with my servants at home. When John came back, I told him I didn't like the Spencer sisters. 'They're good women,' he said, and he'd not hurt their feelings by casting them off. I pleaded all along for him to give them up as he'd promised. He said he couldn't do it and be a good Church member."

John and Caroline argued and the Cannon family joined in. They deafened Caroline's ears with the blessings of plural marriage for days. She got some relief when one of Brother Cannon's wives declared that Miles had made Owen a solemn promise when he brought her away from home and friends, and it was his duty to live up to his vow. Miles then proposed to seek counsel from the holy Twelve. Miss Owen went to Elder John Taylor, who said they themselves must settle the matter. If the three married Miles, the oldest lady must be the first wife. But any of them could give up Miles or he could give up any of them.

Tribune Reporter: "Why didn't you draw out of the nasty entanglement?"

Miss Owen: "I was not going to. I'd known John longest. I had the best right."

Tribune Reporter: "Then seeing no choice but to have a part of Miles or none at all, you consented to a part?"

In front of the reporter, the *Tribune* stated, Miss Owen beat the floor with her toes, moved her hands nervously, then with effort said, "I consented." The reporter left Miss Owen with her mixed feelings of love and betrayal and said, "She has spirit and vivacity and her instincts appear to be right, but she lacks the moral fortitude to throw off the evil influence which this man exercises over her."

Five days later, the *Herald* printed a letter signed by Caroline. Her letter said that the *Tribune* reporters had asked her to write her history and that she had refused. The reporters threatened to write a statement for her. The letter said Caroline still refused to write her history, so the reporters themselves wrote up the interview for the *Tribune*.

The interview may or may not have been made up, but it does have threads of Caroline woven through it. The interview states incorrectly that John was baptized in Melbourne. Emily Sleight, John's daughter, said John was baptized in Sidney, and Church records support her. The interview, however, does give the correct country, Australia, and Caroline herself could have been confused about the city. John had probably stopped in both Sidney and Melbourne many times.

Family folklore says John served in the navy, but I have been unable to find his name among the naval records. In addition, the stories of John's sea duty mention transporting commodities to England and his skill with canvas, rope, and knots. In saying John served in the merchant marines, the interview may be more correct than family lore, and how could a reporter have correctly guessed these details?

Further evidence of Caroline in the interview is her description of the Spencer sisters where she calls them "brown," "squint-eyed," and "coarse." In the trial testimony Caroline refers to the Spencer sisters as "two squaws." The *Tribune* reporters may have made up the interview, but if they did, they must have talked to Caroline first.

Besides alleging that the *Tribune* had made up the interview with her, Caroline went on to retract her accusations against John. Part of her letter to the *Herald* read:

My husband has never informed me that he has another wife, and outside my own suspicion I have no knowledge that he has one. I have heard him most emphatically deny that he married the girls of whom I was jealous. I am deeply sorry that my suspicions should have induced

me to have taken a course whereby I have brought upon my brethren and sisters, my husband and myself unmerited odium, and my only desire in writing this is to acquaint the public with the facts of the case and leave them to judge for themselves concerning the issue.

Caroline's letter shook my folklore. How could she say that? John had married Caroline and Emily Spencer on the same day. We all knew that, didn't we? Did we?

Caroline's public apology to John may have reconciled them for a few days or weeks, but tempers erupted again, and in a few months John came to trial for bigamy and Caroline was the key witness against him.

On Thursday morning the 1st of May 1879 in the crowded courtroom of the Third Judicial District Court, Territory of Utah, the prosecutor, a Mr. Beatty, made his opening statement. In it he said, "It devolves upon us to show that when John Horne Miles married Caroline Owen, he already was married to Emily Spencer."

John sat between his attorneys, Judge Tilford and Judge Hagan, in a pin-striped suit and a wide silk tie. He was only twenty-four years old. Seven months earlier, on the 4 October 1878, John had returned from twenty-eight months in England where he had served as a missionary. On the 24th of October he married, and on the 25th a marshall arrested him for bigamy.

Saturday, May 3rd, Caroline took the witness stand. Reporters from the three Salt Lake City newspapers were there to record her testimony, and their three accounts seem to tell the same story, except for some few details. For example, the *Deseret News* referred to the witness as Caroline Owen except for one time when it called her Caroline Owen Male. "Male" looked like an error until I read the *Herald* account of the trial and the *Tribune* interview with Caroline and learned that she was also known as Caroline Maile.

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The following version of her testimony borrows from all three newspapers and omits most of the questions asked to elicit the testimony. I have written her testimony as though it were a single court appearance although she actually took the witness stand numerous times. Caroline says:

My parents' name was Maile, and when they died, I went to live with my aunt and uncle Owen, and they asked me to take their name. I taught school in England and Holland. I arrived in this territory October 4th, 1878, with John, his stepmother, three half-brothers, a half sister, and some emigrants. I am 23; John is thirteen months older. I first knew John ten or twelve years ago in London. I was well acquainted with him until he went to sea in 1870. After that we wrote each other and in about three years, he asked me to be his wife. I wrote back yes. He didn't write anymore. I heard his ship had wrecked and thought he'd drowned.

Three years after his last letter, he came to my house in London and told me he was a Mormon missionary. That was in the fall of 1876. I was a member of the Episcopal church, but the next month I was baptized a Mormon. He said he was engaged to two sisters in St. George, but that he'd tell them he was going to marry me. He thought they'd back out, but if they didn't, I'd be his first wife, and they'd be his second and third. He would've married me in England, but it was against Church rules for a missionary to marry. I consented to come to America, if I could be the first wife. We left on the *Wyoming* with 600 Mormon immigrants.

I arrived in Utah October 4th and lived with the Cannons until my wedding on the 24th. John learned that the Church might not let me be the first wife and I went to Elder Taylor. He told me to bring John and the other ladies; there was order in the Church. I went back with John and Emily and Julia Spencer and gave Elder Taylor my reasons for being first: I'd known John and had been engaged to him longest. Elder Taylor talked to John, but John wouldn't give up the girls, and they wouldn't give him up. John said he couldn't marry me first; he had to follow Church counsel and marry his oldest fiancée first. I thought

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about it. I agreed to be the second wife, and on October 24th, we went to the Endowment House where Elder Wells married us.

I had asked for a wedding reception, and I didn't want Emily Spencer there; she could have her own reception. After our wedding, John and I were walking from the Endowment House to the Cannons' when he told me he'd invited Emily to the reception. I objected. He said she was his wife as much as I was and she would be there. I vowed to insult her if she showed up.

In the Cannons' house, about seven, I was asked to play the piano and told Emily to get off the stool. John said, "Emily, my wife, don't rise." She didn't and I slapped her, and he said, "I'm ashamed of you." I went to slap him, but Kate Connelly grabbed my arms.

John wanted to dance with Emily, but I refused to play. I introduced him to another young lady, but he said, "I'm only dancing with my wife Emily."

I left the house before supper and went up the street. John and George Cannon came and brought me back. I left again about 9:30, went by the side of the house, and talked with Cannons' daughter. I returned and John escorted me and Emily to the dining room. I said, "I don't know if I belong at the head of the table since I'm not the first wife, but I'll take it anyway," and I did.

After supper we went into the parlor, and John wanted to sing. I played and he showed off his talent. Emily remained at the Cannons' house until John took her away. I wasn't in the room when they left the reception.

Later, I left the reception alone, walked to Sarah Cannon's house, and went to bed. John came in my room at one or two in the morning. I objected and said, "Go back to your other woman. I don't want you." He locked the door and said he'd make sure of me, as he was sure of Emily. He stayed all night.

"How much did you object?" said defense counsel Hagan.

"I wish you'd been there to see," said Caroline.

Henry Landon Miles

"I wish I had too," said Hagan.

(Laughter rocked the courtroom.)

Judge Emerson frowned and his banging gavel echoed in the courtroom. "Another outburst," the judge said, "and the court will be cleared."

The next evening, [Caroline said] I went to Marshall Shaughnessy's to enter my complaint. I stayed at the marshall's house for a week and then went back to John. He'd stolen my things so I went looking for him. I found him at American Fork on Saturday evening and returned to Angus Cannon's with him on the train Sunday morning. I lived with him at Cannon's until December.

In December John and I went to St. George for about three months. In St. George, he told me he'd always intended to make Emily his first wife. He said when the trial was over, he'd marry Julia too and I could tell all the damned lawyers in Salt Lake about it. He kept saying Emily was his first wife and that I was only his second. I never lived with him in St. George. I never saw Emily Spencer there either, but I have reason to believe that John lived with her there.

The jurors retired. In minutes they returned with a guilty verdict and were discharged. The defense moved for a new trial, and the sentence was deferred. The district attorney insisted on bail of \$10,000, but Judge Emerson ignored him and set John's bail at \$5,000.

The hands on the clock were both on two when I looked up from my first draft of Caroline's testimony. I rocked the chair back, looked at the ceiling, shut my eyes, and happened to rest my right little finger on a key. I opened my eyes and ////////// filled the computer screen as the key zipped out slanted lines. I jerked my hand from the keyboard and, looking into the lines, Dad's image drifted into my mind.

"Aunt Emily Sleight should've told this story," Dad said. "What do you think of old Paddy now, leading on that snooty heifer like that?"

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I flinched my left elbow into my ribs to block a ghostly thumb. "Have you seen Paddy and Caroline yet?" I imagined, but Dad didn't answer. I wondered if writing about dead people brought them back to defend themselves. For months after Dad died, I envisaged this birdlike creature perched on my right shoulder at times. The creature had a vulture's body and Dad's head. It watched the screen with a sullen expression and moved its head sluggishly from time to time as I wrote about Dad.

Once Dad's thoughts penetrated my mind and said, "You'll make everyone think I was mean as hell."

"You were. You said so yourself," I said.

I had believed that Paddy had married Emily and Caroline on the same day, but the testimony given at the trial made me doubt. I went to the family records; I read that John married Emily and Caroline on 23 October 1878, which conflicted with the date given at the trial, 24 October 1878. I can still believe that John married two wives on the same day but which day?

The Endowment House record, inaccessible to the prosecution in 1879, is now available to the public, and I obtained a copy of it. This record is number 6723, Book II, Page 307.

Name in full	Miles John Horne
When born	21 May 1854
Where born	London, Middlesex, Eng.
When died	10 Aug. 1925
Father	John Henry William Miles (1825)
Mother	Eliza Horne
When married to Emily Spencer	_____
When baptized	6 Mar. 1873

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Was the marriage date filled in and later erased? I don't know, but no marks of erasure showed on my copy.

While scanning my family journal of records for the marriage date, I saw that Wilma Madsen of Idaho Falls had prepared the records. I had met Wilma once, and my wife had copied Wilma's records of the Miles family in 1967 while awaiting my return from Vietnam. That was when we got Emily Sleight's history of John Horne Miles. Mother told me Wilma was still alive, so I called Wilma and told her of my project.

"Did you hear of John's shipwreck?" I said.

"No. Where'd you ever hear that?" said Wilma.

"Caroline Owen said it at the trial."

"You can't trust Caroline," Wilma said. "She wasn't interested in the Church until Grandpa inherited a fortune. She joined the Church so he'd marry her, and she talked about the temple ceremony at the trial. Caroline disgraced the Church and herself too."

"Have you seen John's journal?" I said.

"No."

"Emily Sleight says she's quoting from it in her account of John's missionary labors in England."

"I stopped researching John Miles twenty years ago," Wilma said, "when the family showed no interest in my work. The St. George side of the family said John had written his own history, and they asked why we needed another one. They said his history was in the Church archives."

"Is anyone doing research on John now?"

"Mike Miles has copies of my research, and a Dick Miles is doing something too. They both live in Salt Lake."

In the telephone directory for Salt Lake City, there were four Mike Milesees, and on the fourth call, I reached my Mike Miles. Two weeks later, I drove to his house on West Saguaro Drive in West Jordan.

"Come to the kitchen," Mike said as his child led me up the stairs from the entrance door. "I've got it all on the table."

Mike handed me a picture of a young man. "That's John Horne Miles," Mike said. "He was either leaving on his mission or getting married." Mike stood over a cardboard box of family memorabilia on the table.

"I've never seen John before," I said. The picture was taken more than 110 years ago. John looked formal in an elegant pin-striped suit and wide silk tie. John's hair was dark like my dad's, but his facial features reminded me of my cousin Bill Elison. I found the resemblance eerie, because Bill inherited John's silk hat, and I've seen how it just fits him.

"Have you heard the stories about John Horne Miles?" I asked. Mike passed another picture, an older John with a receding hairline.

"No. My folks divorced and my mother raised me," Mike said. He was examining newspaper clippings. "Have you seen these obituaries?"

I took them and said, "Did you visit your dad?" I perused an obituary. It said John went to Eton College for his early education, apprenticed as an officer in the British navy, accepted the gospel in Australia, resigned from the navy to come to Utah, served a mission in England. As I read the obituary, my thoughts turned to the arrogant letter from Eton College, and I had to concede that our family had basked, undeservedly, in the prestige of Eton at least since 1925.

Mike said, "I visited Dad once in a while, but he never mentioned John Miles." Mike was selecting John's papers from those of other relatives. "Have you seen the articles John wrote for the *Millennial Star*?"

"No," I said, looking up and putting the articles on my stack of papers. John had received a sizable inheritance, I read, which he had used to transport Mormon immigrants to Utah. John had also been a noted

scholar of early Mormon history. At his death, he was working in the Church Historian's office for Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, who spoke at John's funeral. Does everyone's history get changed like this I wondered? This obituary writer, probably a member of the family, had added to John's prestige but had erased the trial that altered John's life and printed him into the history books. At John's death in 1925, I suppose the family found the polygamy trial a source of embarrassment and was trying to forget it.

I looked up from my reading. "Mike, how long you been collecting this stuff?" A child peeked around the door.

"Ten years, but I copied a lot from Wilma Madsen." Mike scanned and sorted materials while he talked.

"Have you read all of this?" I said and looked at my growing pile. It would take hours to read, and Mike had to leave soon for Ogden to work the swing shift at an electronics firm.

"I haven't read much on John Miles," he said, "just collected." His wife came in, we three chatted, and I complimented Mike on his materials and for locating John's journal in the Church archives. A researcher friend of mine had tried unsuccessfully to find it; the journal wasn't listed on the index of journals. Mike had ferreted it out using the index of donors. He searched for names that appeared in his genealogy line. Then he reviewed the materials donated by them. He found the journal among the items donated by a relative named Cranshaw.

Mike offered to mail me copies of Paddy's papers, and I left for the LDS Church archives where I filled in the forms with the number Mike had given me. In minutes the microfilm of John's journal arrived.

The journal began in May 1876 when John left Salt Lake City for London. It read like my missionary journal, daily travels and people visited. The only difference was that he had made an entry every single day.

I read a few pages and began paying more attention to abbreviations and typos than content. John had typed it all. How did he type entries daily? He travelled a lot, spent his nights in different places except for weekends; he spent most of them at a Church office. Did he have a portable typewriter? I turned the pages. Did he keep notes and type his journal at the office on weekends? Did he type it each week from memory?

I came upon entries of interest.

Tuesday, August 1st, 1876: "Having found Caroline Owen's address went to Wickham Woolwick to see her."

August 10th he said: "Went to see C. Owen at East Wickam."

Friday, September 1st, reads: "Received a letter from Caroline. O. H. Maile proposing herself as a candidate for Baptism." And at last John's epiphanic moment arrived:

"Sunday September 3rd. Between meetings the Elders (Bro Binder officiating) attended two Baptisms Caroline O. H. Maile (21) & Agnes Mary Willmott (18) first named being an intimate friend of self & family for many years & one who was converted by the Almighty through my instrumentaling. After meeting confirmed Agnes Mary & Caroline. Bro Binder being mouth piece for the Spirit in the first and J. H. M. in the second place. Feelings on this day indescribable joy & gratitude to the Giver of all good unbounded."

Caroline must have been sharing this state of ecstasy with John, but two days after the rapture of her baptism, John tells us that her faith was already being tested.

"Went back to Kilburn saw S. [Sister] Clemenshaw informed by her that S. [Sister] Mailes persecution for the cause had commenced."

Wednesday, September 7th: "Wet Weather started with C. M. to Woolwich but was compelled to return." In this entry I see Caroline and John getting together to commiserate. She must have told John of her aunt's anger at the baptism; she had expected it, but that expectation had not

prepared Caroline for the actual event. John tried to bolster her faith, relating his father's attitude toward his own baptism. Afterward, John might have attempted to accompany Caroline to her aunt's home at Wickham Woolwich, but the rain prevented his going. From his entry for the next day, we learn that Caroline had lost her job, possibly because of her religion, and John had begun to assist her in finding another one.

Thursday, September 8th: "Endeavouring to find employment for C. M."

The entry for the following day is unclear, but I think it means he found a job for Caroline. Friday, September 9th: "Went to Office and located C. M. Thank God."

John's journal preserves fragments of a story of young love heightened by religious sentiments. Between these fragments of written experience there is much left out. In this unwritten space, I see a young lady and a young man both from privileged families, handsome, well dressed, educated, committed to a new religion, in love and discreetly frivolous, unable to court because of missionary rules, showing up at the same church functions, happening onto the same train for part of the way home. Theirs was a state of rapture, of a forbidden association; a glance of the other excited, handshakes were heaven.

John referred to Caroline in code, like the love notes I exchanged with a girl named Sharon in the third grade. John, except for his first mention of her, seems to refer to Caroline by the code names: C. Owen, Caroline Maile, O. H. Maile, S. Maile, C. M., C. O. H. M.

John supported Caroline when she became a Mormon and her family and friends turned against her. Caroline's aunt turned against her and she lost her job, but she remained with her new religion. Her faith was strong enough to trade her position of privilege to be a polygamous wife in Utah. Then John could not marry her first as he had promised if he married two

ladies on the same day. Why was it so important to John to marry both on the same day? Why didn't he marry Caroline first and marry Emily Spencer days, weeks, or months later? Why did he insist that Emily attend the wedding reception?

John's pen draws a Caroline who is sharply different from the Caroline John's daughter Emily Sleight depicts in the typed characters of his journal. Emily Sleight said Caroline was cool to the message when Elder John Miles first visited her. When John told Caroline he was engaged to Emily and Julia Spencer, Caroline got angry; she even broke up with John.

Emily Sleight said John's father owned a pub in London near Picadilly Circus, where palace guards ate and drank before and after duty. The pub, named *George*, had passed from father to son for generations. In January 1878, in the second year of John's mission, his father died and the pub passed to John, who promptly sold it. At that time John's share was valued at about U.S. \$250,000.

Emily Sleight said Caroline learned of the inheritance and wrote to John, inviting him to her house to teach her his message of Mormonism. Caroline "listened while he explained about plural marriage and finally consented to join the church if that was the only way he would have her as his wife."

What Emily Miles Sleight wrote about John and Caroline she must have heard from John, or from Emily Spencer who had heard it from John. Emily Sleight's story shows she is unaware of what John wrote in his journal about Caroline: unaware that Caroline converted to Mormonism sixteen months *before* John received his inheritance instead of after he received it; unaware that Caroline did not react coolly to Mormonism, but was baptized only one month and two days after John visited her as a missionary. And Emily Sleight was unaware that Caroline suffered persecution for becoming a Mormon.

Henry Landon Miles

As the years passed, the Church had turned away from polygamy. Spending his inheritance for legal fees must have vexed John more and more as he struggled against poverty. How could he rationalize his past history without remembering Caroline as a woman who lacked faith?

The fragments of Caroline's story lay hidden in John's journal, unchanged, while John and Emily Spencer Miles and their family reconstructed Caroline's character and conversion experience. Later, their daughter Emily Miles Sleight wrote their story, passed it on to relatives, placed a copy in the archives of the LDS Church.

In reading John's missionary journal, I noted that he and his father had a tense relationship. Of his arrival in London as a missionary on July 1st, 1876, John recorded: "Arrived at Father's house in Kilburn 9 p.m. Unexpected arrival, consternation immense as a matter of course." John's missionary spirit did not endear himself to his father; John's entry for the very next day said, "Father refusing to hear anything 'for or against' The Cause." A few months later John's father was angry at him for preaching to his younger brother. John said the devil was in his father's house.

Emily Sleight mentioned this disaffection. She said that John and his father were reconciled only shortly before his father's death. In his dying days John's father told John of his mistress and their four children and asked John to care for them. When John mentioned his father's death years later, he gave Emily Sleight the impression that Caroline had become interested in Mormonism after his father's death. By rearranging history to have Caroline's baptism take place after he received his inheritance, John made the conversion story consistent with his reconstruction of Caroline's character: she was a money grubber. Actually, she became a Mormon when John's relationship with his father was so tense that he could hardly have expected an inheritance.

John's father died 10 January 1878, and after the funeral John visited the mistress and her family, who were living in a small cottage in a ghetto

Trial of John Horne Miles

in Dickens's London. Before he left for Utah about nine months later, the mistress and her children had converted to the LDS Church, and John took them on the boat with him.

Other references to Caroline in John's journal only mention that John received letters from her. John's journal goes on for 51 pages, then it breaks off in mid-sentence with "May 18, 1877 Breakfasted with the Buckeridge folks & spent the morning . . ." Wilma Madsen heard that in his old age, John began ripping out journal pages and giving them to people who asked for information contained on them. If so, maybe people will donate them to the Church archives some day, and we will be able to learn John's thoughts about his experience with plural marriage. More likely, it will be how it is in my dreams: John and I meet in a world other than this. We are on a long road that crosses a grassy plain. There is a city in the distance. John puts his arm around my shoulders, and as we start walking toward the city, he says, "Come along, Henry, and let me tell you a story."

Koli Musicians in the Taiwan Folk Arts Museum / Loretta M. Sharp

Two round-faced women
sitting on a stone bench.

Both are a flow of soft folds
and curves, hair gathered
in topknots and draped
over their shoulders,
everything loose
but their taut,
slippered feet.

The flute-player wears a green tunic
and long, yellow skirt,
her left foot poised,
waiting to time the first, high note
her hand reaches for.

The feet of the other point
in expectancy,
and in her hands, cymbals
wait joining,
the knobs
filling each small palm.

These rice-powder-white
women
with carefully arched brows have been fired
and then incised
with bamboo blades,
slipcoated,
burnished,
dried,
re-fired,
and glazed,
their small parts
carefully,
separately
fitted.

The display case
says they are sculpture,
engraving,
painting,
potting.
It does not say
that kiln-quickened
to the point
of viscous impulse,
the Koli musicians
are glazed with the promise
of all sound,
that they are caught

in the pause before every act:

wrists flexed

lips pursed

fingers poised

for the flux of performance

perfectly unrealized.



Randy Stuart

God on Donahue

Margaret Young

JOSEPH, AN OLD MORMON ON HIS WAY TO A *DONAHUE* APPEARANCE, found god at a rest-stop. God was blowing dandelion seeds over Utah's red sandstone. His hair resembled the seeds he was blowing: soft, wispy, luminous. His two-inch beard was luminous too—almost radiant, in fact—but not brighter than the noon-day sun because God was obviously travelling incognito.

Joseph, having always believed in an anthropomorphic god, experienced a warm, revelatory sensation in his chest the second he laid eyes on the guy—not heartburn, but something *like* heartburn, except peaceful. He approached God with equal parts trepidation and embarrassment, since he and his wife Utahna had just been having a fight. (This one over what to name their spirit children in the next life.)

"Hello," said Joseph shyly, stroking his own smooth chin.

God turned to him and, viola voiced, said, "Nice to see you, son."

Evidence enough. He wanted to kneel, Joseph did, and to kiss those scruffy army boots God was wearing. But Joseph understood he wasn't supposed to have figured out who this was, and felt it incumbent on himself to let the Almighty keep His secret. So, though he knew God knew he knew, Joseph went along with the game. He tried to keep his voice

from quivering when he said, "Can I give you a lift anywhere?" Blushing at his question, he realized this was the first time he had addressed his maker as "you" instead of "thou." Certainly, he thought, he should have said "Sir."

"I mean, do you need a lift? Sir? I know you don't *need* one, but . . ."

"I'd be much obliged," said God.

Joseph understood there was purpose in this. Some reason God wanted Joseph to take him to Burbank and Donahue.

The next problem was Utahna, who was sitting in the front seat reading *The Joy Of Sex*.

Utahna was near seventy, but looked closer to forty. Though her hair was as short and white as her husband's, her figure didn't fit her age, and she was proud of that fact. Joseph was embarrassed by it, afraid people might assume he was starving her or refusing to let her grow old and fat. Afraid they might think because she looked like that, he must be some kind of sex fiend. Which he wasn't. The sex fiend in the family was Utahna, who regularly attended an aerobics class, where she wore flesh colored tights under black lace tights. She pranced around a gym floor while a singer named Madonna belted out "Spank me!" from a boom box.

Joseph had actually witnessed this, gone to the class at Utahna's invitation, and left in utter shock. Later, he said to his brother, who was Stake President, "When the world is using the word 'Patriarchal' like something dirty, when the world thinks Mormons are anti-women because of this not letting the sisters have the priesthood business, I ask you, could there be anything right about a bunch of our women—Mormon grandmas—dressing themselves up like strumpets, kicking up their heels and yelling 'Spank me!'? Could there be anything right about that?" His brother called Utahna's actions a "lack of propriety" (pronounced

"perpietry") but seemed far more amused by her than disturbed. "She's basically a good woman," he reminded Joseph. "You know that."

Yes, Joseph did know that. But he also knew Utahna, and at this moment, he was scared to death she'd say something dirty to God. (Wasn't she the woman, after all, who had once opened a Sunday school lesson with "Brothers and sisters, we live in the world of the almighty dollar and the almighty orgasm"? And this when Joseph was Sunday School president! He had had to go home from church sick that day, unable to face the curious eyes of the ward members, all silently asking just how much he knew about almighty orgasms.)

Utahna was, in fact, the reason they were going to be on *Donahue*. The show's title was "Guilty Women Who Can't Get Enough and Men Who Think They've Given Plenty." Basically, they were going to talk about their sex life in front of several thousand Americans, and Utahna was going to pretend she felt guilty. Joseph would never have agreed to it, but Utahna told him she'd go alone if he didn't come with. So he hoped to be able to lend some dignity to the exhibit, bear testimony, maybe win a convert or two. And the two thousand dollars Phil was going to pay them would come in handy. One tenth, of course, would go directly into God's pocket as tithing. Joseph liked the idea of Phil Donahue making a contribution to the Kingdom.

While God was zipping his backpack, Joseph rapped on the car window, trying to tell Utahna *something important* with his eyes.

She rolled the window down, her mouth puckered with impatience. He flicked his head towards God, hoping she would catch on to things without his having to spell them out.

Without saying a word, Utahna asked him what on earth he wanted now.

He moved his eyes, hoping she would follow them to the vision.

"Well, Joe," she said in her Lauren Bacall voice, "what?"

Joseph cleared his throat. "I've asked *him*" (he moved his eyes significantly towards God again) "to ride with us."

"A hitcher?" she demanded.

Joseph realized she didn't recognize her maker and was not having any revelation. And he knew it would be presumptuous of him to reveal God's identity. But it would also be presumptuous to suggest that the Almighty ride in the back seat. Utahna would have to move.

"Utahna," he said in a soft, urgent voice, "I have invited Him. Now wouldn't you be more comfortable in the back seat where you could lie down?"

Her brows lifted to high suspicion. "I'm reading," she said. "I read sitting up. You want me to stop reading this, don't you. Well I'm sorry but—" She started to hold the dirty book up. Joseph pushed it back down into her lap. "Utahna," he whispered fiercely, "get in the back, you can read later." He paused to muster his self control. "It's important, honey."

Her eyes softened at the endearment, which he hadn't used on her in several years. He wasn't sure where it had come from now, though he guessed God had inspired it.

"All right," she said softly.

Joseph turned back to God. "Why don't you—Sir—get up in front with me. My wife's tired. She'll be resting in the back so's you and I can chat." It still bothered him to call God "you", but in this informal conversation, he couldn't bring himself to use the more respectful words. ("Thou and I can chat." He mulled the sounds in his mind, and sure enough, they sounded hokey, insincere.)

Utahna shook God's hand as she moved to the rear. "We're not in the habit of picking hitchers up, but you look honest enough. You Mormon?"

Joseph laughed and made a helpless, apologetic gesture. "Oh Utahna," he said, "of course He is!"

"Well then," she said. "Well then, okay. Good."

Laughing more fully, Joseph said, "Good is right." He almost nudged God in the ribs.

When Joseph started the engine, he realized he hadn't done what he had planned to do at the rest stop. His bladder reminded him as he turned the key. Still, he felt he couldn't go back now. The journey to his destiny had begun—and besides, he was too embarrassed to mention the problem to God. Then, not five minutes onto the highway, he found he didn't have to go anymore. He hadn't wet his pants or anything, just suddenly didn't need to go. It was a little miracle, and he knew it. He smiled thankfully at God, who smiled graciously back.

When he thought Utahna was asleep, Joseph asked God the burning question on his mind: "Sir, what do you think of the name Elroy?" This was the one he had reserved for the firstborn of his spirit children when he was a god in the next world. It had been his father's name. Joseph thought the "El" sounded like deity and the "Roy" like royalty, though Utahna (who had never liked Joseph's father) deemed it "just plain stupid." When he had first suggested it, she said, "Oh goodness, Joe, it sounds *Mexican*. Like Eldorado or El Cid. I'm not prejudiced, but it does."

God smiled beatifically. "Nice name," he said.

Joseph pressed his foot jubilantly into the gas pedal, then felt Utahna rouse herself and sit up.

"It's a stupid name," she said. "I heard you, Joe. Don't try pulling this on me, I know what you're doing, you men in cahoots. Now, given what we know of Heaven, a firstborn son would have some damn special responsibilities. Good Lord, who would want to saddle him with such an asinine name as that?"

Margaret Young

Joseph's stomach squinched in on itself and went queazy. In two sentences she had managed "Damn," "Good Lord" and "asinine." He was grateful he didn't believe in a vindictive God.

"Can you see it?" Utahna went on. "Can you imagine mortals praying to God the Father and his son Elroy? It's a damn stupid name."

"Please, Utahna," Joseph whispered, his dentures clenched.

God smiled tolerantly, and Joseph saw He was amused. So he smiled too, even chuckled at Utahna's adorable candor.

"Lord love ya," said God.

This love, Joseph knew, was directed to both Utahna and himself. "Thank you," he said, consumed with reverence. "I mean it. Thank you."

He found, to his amazement, that he didn't have to pee until Las Vegas—when, predictably, God slept.

They arrived at the studio with two hours to spare. By this time, Joseph had asked God if he'd like to go on Donahue with them. God had pretended to consider it, then said firmly, "Sure."

Joseph felt his heart burn within him. Well, he had prayed for wisdom and guidance insofar as this Donahue business was concerned. Seemed God was answering his prayer in person.

The stage manager, Jerri Shelley, a pretty little redhead in tight jeans, was bustling about the studio, arranging chairs and setting plants in front of light fixtures. When Joseph introduced himself, she verified his name and said, "I hope you're not feeling nervous."

"No," Joseph drawled, then took her confidentially aside and said they needed to talk.

"Cold feet?" she said.

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"No, not that. It's I've brought another guest."

She raised her brows.

"I'd like him to go on with us," said Joseph, gesturing towards God, who at the moment looked like a haggard but kindly old bum.

"Him?" said Jerri Shelley.

Joseph closed his eyes serenely. "Him."

She started in on a prepared speech explaining why just the scheduled guests are permitted to go on, but was only three sentences into it when Joseph cut her off. "You don't understand," he said. "This man knows *everything* about Utahna and me. He *has* to be there with us, Miss Shelly. Otherwise," (he drew himself up to his full 5'5") "I won't go on myself, nor permit my wife to neither."

He had raised his voice high enough that Utahna heard. She strode over. "Joe," she said threateningly, arms akimbo. "Joe, what are you doing?"

Joseph made meaningful eye contact with God, and they both nodded. Then, in a voice rich with conviction, Joseph whispered, "Miss Shelly, Utahna, I know this will sound crazy, but this here, well this is—in a mortal disguise, you understand—it's God."

God took a sharp breath, then chuckled once and moved his head in what looked to Joseph like a most dignified bow.

Jerri Shelley, whom Joseph was afraid was probably promiscuous, gave one double take and then seemed to relax. Joseph witnessed this. It was like she could tell God's eyes truly saw her, saw her soul. And loved it.

Not so Utahna, who only laughed. "Oh not again," she said. "Honestly, Joe, is this like that vision you had of me in the bathroom?" She gave him no time to answer, but went on to describe his greatest fear: that she would go first and find someone else she'd rather spend eternity with. She described how one morning, Joseph had thought he had a vision of

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her as an angel. It was way before dawn, she went on dramatically to Jerri Shelly, "and I turned on the bathroom light. Well, I was just standing there looking in the mirror when Joe startled up awake. And I was wearing, oh you know, this real sexy white negligee, and the bathroom light sort of haloed me, I guess, like I was a spirit, so Joe thought I was going to tell him I had passed on and was dating the apostle Paul. Well, when I turned to him and said what I said, he was shocked back to earth."

What she had said was she'd never understand why, after near fifty years, he couldn't remember to put the seat down afterwards. She had also pointed out that he hadn't flushed. "I cannot see how someone who holds a temple recommend," she had said, "would not flush the toilet."

"Joseph," she said to Jerri Shelley and God, "is always having himself a revelation."

But Joseph saw how deeply Jerri had been affected by her own revelation. Utahna's speech made no difference. Jerri Shelley seemed lit up. She smiled brilliantly and gave only half-reluctant permission for God to come on the show. As Joseph looked over her shoulder, she wrote down their bios:

Joseph: Mormon farmer, age seventy-two. Wife claims he's usually impotent but still plans on fathering several thousand spirit children in next life. Embarrassed by wife's aerobic outfits.

Utahna: Wife of Joseph, age sixty-seven. Thinks the world dangerously sex-crazed, claims nonetheless her libido climbs with her age. Does aerobics daily. Feels sexually cheated and guilty.

God: ???

When Phil Donahue came onstage and she gave him the cards—only ten minutes before showtime—he looked first amused and then accusing. "God?"

God on Donahue

She shrugged and pointed to the hitchhiker.

Phil made a helpless gesture. "Well, *this* should be interesting."

Joseph noticed that Donahue was exactly as tall and white-haired as God. This talk show host, it seemed, was a mortal imitation of the Eternal One. Well yes, mused Joseph, in a lot of ways, Phil was like God, though more liberal, of course. He was a mediator, a confessor, a judge. Joseph had seen on television the way he worked an audience and could imagine God setting ocean waves into motion just like that. And how he moralized sometimes—like the studio was Sinai, though his words were burned into film, not stone.

But next to the real, omnipotent McCoy, Donahue looked merely slick. At the moment, he was straightening his tie before the studio mirror and practicing his "I give up" gesture.

The thick wire-rimmed glasses made him appear intellectual, but also puppyish, Clark Kentish.

Then Phil Donahue strolled onstage, wearing his famous, distracted smile. He cracked a couple of lame jokes ("Gotta loosen you up, folks"), and the lights dimmed. Jerri Shelley seated God first, of course, then Utahna and Joseph, and the *Donahue* music began. Marty, the producer, cued Phil to start talking.

"What happens," he said, reading the card, "when SHE can't get enough and HE says he's given plenty already—and I don't mean cherry chocolates. Stay tuned for *Donahue*."

A commercial for Metamucil came on the monitor. Joseph watched, thinking what an embarrassing job that poor actor had. How would it be to get paid for sitting in a chair and making your face look like what you really wanted to do was have a bowel movement. Joseph thought he'd die before doing a commercial like that.

The *Donahue* music began again.

Margaret Young

"Let me introduce you," Phil said, when Marty pointed, "to Joseph and his wife Utahna."

Utahna took off her sweater—the blue cardigan Joseph had given her for Mother's Day. She was wearing a neon green aerobics outfit underneath. She stood and began to unzip her pants.

Shooting his eyes to God's, Joseph pushed her back to her seat. "Oh please," he moaned. "Utahna, don't let's lose all our dignity whatsoever."

Donahue approached Joseph, who still had his hand firmly on Utahna's thigh, and smiled confidentially, "Well I guess this is the core of the problem, isn't it. Did you know she was wearing that outfit, Joe?"

Like a scared squirrel, Joseph looked up into Phil's magnified eyes and moaned again. Utahna tried to rise. Joseph pushed her back. His strength was not his own.

"I take it you don't approve of modern aerobics outfits," said Phil.

Joseph grunted.

"But you've got to admit, she looks mighty attractive for someone her age—for someone *any* age, am I right, audience?"

Predictable applause. Utahna bowed from the waist up, loving it.

Donahue made a beautifully perfected gesture of ironic ambivalence, and said, "Well-ll, I dunno." He turned to Utahna. "My goodness," he said. "Here you are a *grandmother* of eight, and you're dressed like that. Now Utahna, you know what your fellow Mormons back in Utah are going to say, don't you?"

She gave a throaty giggle. Joseph noticed someone had painted her lips whore red.

"Well there's Sister Utahna," Phil mocked in his brassy voice, "'doing a strip-tease on the T.V. show!' Aren't you liable to get excommunicated, if I may ask?"

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She giggled again. Joseph put his head in his free hand. "Oh please, act your age," he murmured.

"I'll tell you what," said Phil. "Why don't we have a compromise here. Joseph, I have the distinct impression you don't want your WIFE of—how many years?"

"Forty-seven," Joseph mumbled through his emerging headache.

"Forty-seven years, you are to be congratulated. I take it you don't want your wife of forty-seven years to show her aerobics clothes on national television, am I correct?"

He nodded, still with head in hand.

"Well folks," Phil said, turning full front to audience and camera, "you are just going to have to imagine it. After forty-seven years, we don't want to put any rift in THIS marriage, let me tell YOU! But I will tell you Utahna is wearing" (he shuffled his cue cards and read) "flesh-colored tights under black lace tights. Did I get that right?"

Some blank-faced blond guy on row three whistled. Utahna put her fingers in her mouth and whistled back, then waved.

"I take it that means yes," said Phil, smiling that disarming smile that made him seem like such a nice guy—on T.V. "Tell you what, folks, we'll work on Joseph for the next hour. Meanwhile, why don't we just talk about the problem in this marriage. Joseph—Sir—can you put your finger on just when this problem of unequal sexuality manifested itself?" Phil chuckled. "You can relax, Joe. Your wife's not going to escape."

Joseph's arm was still across Utahna's thigh. After a moment's consideration, he put both hands in his lap.

"Go ahead, sir," Phil urged.

"I would say it started," Joseph began slowly, scratching his sweaty chin and looking to God for strength, "back one Halloween seven years back, when one of the grandkids come to our house for some idea of a Halloween costume, and Utahna done what she done."

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"Which was?"

"Obscene, Mr. Donahue."

"Now Joe," Utahna broke in, "you always did take that too serious. It was entirely a joke. Trenton looked cute as a bug's ear, and several people have told me so." She sounded like a gravel-voiced teenager.

"Trenton, who was no more than ten at the time, was dressed," hissed Joseph, "as an exhibitionist. At his grandmother's suggestion."

"Now Joe," she scolded, "don't you go and make it sound like I had our grandson going naked to church."

"Not naked," he admitted. "He wore an overcoat."

"And jeans and a lumberjack shirt," Utahna added.

Phil made a perfect "I'm confused" look.

"And pinned to his crotch," Joseph explained loudly, blurting the words past his shame, "was a damned Ziggy doll! Sorry, Sir." He glanced meekly towards God. "He'd say 'Trick or Treat' and open the overcoat, and there that Ziggy doll would be, hanging out like something else."

"I see." Phil wiped his smile briskly away. Then to the audience, "I'm telling *you*, this is one interesting *family*! Now Utahna," he teased, "is that true? Did you suggest that costume to your grandson? Shame on you!"

The audience howled. Phil chided them approvingly: "Oh you liberal Californians! You're as bad as the New Yorkers!"

"It was a joke!" Utahna yelled, laughing with them. Some of her lipstick had gotten on her teeth—which, Joseph figured, served her right.

"A joke!" she repeated like it might get her a standing ovation.

Joseph was shaking his head in disgust, until he saw the smile on God's face. Then he let himself smile too, though sheepishly. Suddenly, the Halloween episode didn't feel all that significant. It *was* a joke. Utahna had been just fooling, meant no harm.

"Well," said Phil, "one of our sponsors wants a word in here. But when we come back, I'll introduce you to a special guest Joseph has brought along. Believe me, you won't want to miss this. An-nnd we'll be back."

Zip, the make-up man, dashed on stage, murmuring that Phil was sweating more than usual, then powdering everyone's faces, including God's. When Zip did God's face, Joseph noticed how the powder dust seemed to glow and circle His head like sunbeams. Zip clearly sensed it too: there was something different, special about this guest. He backed awkwardly away.

Marty gave the cue. Phil faced the camera and said, "Joseph, do you want to introduce your friend?"

Wiping his palms on his trousers, Joseph stood. "I'll merely say this is someone who knows me and knows you and whose words we should heed and follow." He sat.

"Am I to understand," Phil asked, "and you'll excuse me if I read my cue card here, that you're claiming this man is God?"

"I'm not going beyond the bounds of my permission, Mr. Donahue. I'm not going to make any blanket statements that are not mine to make. I will say that He's here incognito. Why, if He had brought all his glory with him, there's no way in the universe your cameras could film it. Or Him."

Phil turned to God. "Are you? God?" he said.

His face utterly serene, God said, "If you think I am, I am."

"Hear that?" Joseph demanded, leaning earnestly forward, almost standing again. "You know the Old Testament? 'I AM sent me?' You hear that? Is that enough answer for you?"

"Well-ll," Phil said, rubbing his chin, "I'm not quite sure what to say. But if you're God, I'll bet some audience members have a few questions for *you*. Am I right?"

Predictable—though hesitant—applause.

"First off, God, what is your opinion of Utahna's aerobic outfits?"

God smiled and shrugged.

The blond whistler in the third row raised his hand. When Donahue extended the microphone, the blond said caustically, "I have a question for God. This 'one in three and three on one' stuff— isn't that sort of like a multiple personality disorder?"

God looked at Himself on the monitor. Then cameraman number two did a trick. He multiplied God's image so there were three of Him.

"Pretty good," said God. "That's pretty good."

"Boy," said Phil, "the trinity business is the least of our worries, I'd say. Isn't it, audience? What about child abuse and wars and the Burbank traffic jams? Huh? What about those?"

Predictable laughter. Donahue was doing it, working this audience like a puppeteer. You had to admire a fellow like that, Joseph thought, one who just did his job no matter who was looking on.

A hip-looking middle-aged woman with short black hair and painted brows stood up. "I want to ask Utahna why she feels guilty about her libido. Does the fact that Joseph claims God is his constant companion make you feel somehow less a woman? Maybe competitive? Disempowered? Don't you, for example, feel entitled to an orgasm?"

Joseph's jaw dropped. Utahna said, "What?"

Phil interceded. "Utahna, if your husband brings God along with him everywhere he goes, doesn't it make you feel inhibited and guilty for your own sexual desires? I mean, let's face it, what couple wants to sleep with a superego between them?" He went to his mocking voice again. "'Come on, Honey, just crawl on over him and we'll have us some marital relations!'"

Utahna tried to smile. "I don't know exactly what you're insinuating, Mr. Donahue, but we only just met this man. And—regardless of what I

wear to aerobics—we are church going folks. This man certainly don't sleep with us and neither does his ego."

Phil grinned demonically. "Are you sure, Utahna?"

No longer flippant, Utahna pulled herself up with queenly grace. "Of course I'm sure!"

"You drove here from Utah, I understand. Well who rode in the front seat, may I ask: you or God?"

"First off," she defended, "I want to say something. To me, this man is not God. To me, he's not. To me, he's a manifestation of my husband's fantasies. Joe has them all the time. Now, I'm not saying he's unreal, this man here. Of course he's real. But Joe has gone and made him into something above and beyond that."

"But Utahna," Phil said, still smiling, "who rode in front beside your husband?"

She flicked her head towards God and admitted, "He did."

Phil nodded thoughtfully.

Another question from the audience, this one from a fat teenaged girl. "I have a question for God? I just want to say that I'm from Oregon and I really like palm trees and I wish they could survive in colder weather so more people could enjoy them. That's all. Thank you."

"Yes," said Phil. "Well, we were talking about Utahna's rising libido and guilt and Joseph's—how shall I say it—embarrassment? How'm I doing?"

Joseph nodded miserably.

"God," said Donahue, "and let me clarify I'm not being profane here. God, whose side are you on anyway? Joseph's or Utahna's?"

God looked over at Utahna and then at Joseph. "I'm just right here," He said.

"Between them," Phil clarified.

Margaret Young

"Yes."

The calls were coming in now. Phil took the first one. "Thank you for waiting, caller. Go ahead."

A pause.

"Caller? Go ahead."

The man's voice was tremulous and old. "I just wanted to say I'm a believer. That's all. I had to say that."

"Believer in what?" Phil said.

"I believe."

"You believe this man is God."

"I believe in God. If that man says he's God, I believe either he is or he isn't, but I still believe there's a God."

"And if he isn't?"

"Well, then maybe he's crazy, I don't know. But some of my best friends are crazy. I'm not so sure it's bad to be crazy in a world like ours. And how about this idea, Phil? Maybe the crazy people have a different God from the rest of us, and maybe this is their God. How about that for a possibility?"

Phil shrugged. "Well, could be, who am I to say? Or maybe he's the Mormon God. Don't you, as a Mormon, Joe, don't you believe in an corporeal God?"

Joseph leaned forward. "I do," he said. "Yes."

Those words spoken, Joseph saw himself—almost in vision—as a groom, Utahna shy and veiled across from him, holding hands across the temple altar, and God—yes indeed—right there between them. They were telling God they'd stick together, get to know each other, get over their petty fights, sleep together, eat together, make love and babies and become old people together. ("Will you, Joseph?" "Yes, God.") He thought of how naive and beautiful they were as bride and groom. It

God on Donahue

almost made him laugh to think they presumed themselves in love back then. When he pictured himself on their wedding night saying "I love you" to her, the first woman he had seen naked, he just had to smile. The "love" part was only beginning. Why, that was preschool back then!

But now, with God visibly between them, and them all on the Donahue show, he felt he could make a long speech about love and what it meant to have and raise children and to stick together from breakfast through nighttime prayers every day. He thought too, how maybe that first year of their marriage he wore Utahna out with his needs. And now, when she was the one wanting . . . "Oh boy," Joseph murmured to himself. "I've really been a louse." And he knew with his whole soul that God had met him at the rest stop with at least this purpose in mind: to remind him—and the whole viewing audience—of what it meant to be man and wife with God between. Of course God had to be with them when they went on Donahue to tell the world about their sex life! Of course He did!

"Joe," Phil was saying, "was there something you wanted to say?"

Joseph looked right into the camera, knowing his ruddy face was full front on thousands of television screens across the country. Fervently he whispered, "I love my wife."

Instant applause. Utahna put her sweater back on.

"And I think," he went on, "with the two of us as old as we are, she's entitled to as much pleasure as she wants. She certainly has brought me pleasure. And I think maybe this is God's way of preparing us for the next life and whatever is in store." He turned to God. "Is that right?" he said.

God considered it, mulled it over like he was chewing, and answered, "Sounds good."

They went to a commercial, and Zip powdered everyone's faces. Jerri Shelley was watching and seemed to be near tears. And while the stage was specked with little swirls of powder, one young father wheeled his daughter to the first row.

Margaret Young

The child's name was Jill. She had acute aplastic anemia. She was dying.

Phil saw Jill and her father two seconds before Marty's cue. "Hey now," he said, "hey this isn't any televangelist show. No faith healings." He said it in the half-joking, ingratiating way he has, but there was something fully serious underneath. God was making Phil Donahue nervous.

Marty signalled. Phil said, "And we're back, talking to Joseph and Utahna and the Mormon God."

The camera panned them all. God smiled and waved slightly.

"So God," said Phil, "what do you think of Joseph and Utahna's sex life?"

God considered it, puckering his lips so his beard shimmered like there were stars caught in the hairs. "Well," God said, "I can't rightly judge."

Phil put down his microphone and looked over the audience, obviously expecting a disgusted "Ooooooh"—inviting it, in fact, with ironic, taunting eyes. The audience, though, was silent.

"You can't *judge*?" Phil said, more to the viewers than God. "You can't *judge*!?"

"Well a person's sex life is mighty private."

"I am so thrilled to hear you say it. Wonder if we could get that in writing, whaddya say, God? What do *you* think, audience?"

There was no response, and Joseph saw the color drain from Phil's cheeks. Donahue was losing his crowd. Some of them seemed mesmerized. A few appeared to be praying.

And then there was that father with his dying daughter.

Joseph gazed at the girl, her fawn eyes, the blue scarf around her hairless head. A preschooler, no more than four years old. And suddenly, Joseph understood the next part of God's purpose in coming with them on *Donahue*. Here Joseph was, age seventy-two. He had done his life's

God on Donahue

work and here he was condemning his wife on national television for daring to say "orgasm" in church. Now who was acting more childish—Joseph, or that sick little girl who deserved all the years he had already spent?

What Joseph said was, "We're all preschoolers, aren't we, Mr. Donahue. All of us, no matter religion or gender or education or nothing at all. We're all preschoolers in this life. We just hope to learn enough to start first grade beyond this sphere, wouldn't you say so?" What he was thinking was, "This here is ordained. I'm to trade places with that little girl. I'm to give her my years and fully accept how immature I am in spirit. This here is ordained by God!"

Though Phil tried to intervene, Joseph beckoned Jill. "See this little girl here?" he said as the father wheeled her onstage. "See what I mean?" Joseph put both his hands on her head. "Come on over here, God," he said.

And God did. God moved over and put his hands on top of Joseph's, then glanced back at Utahna.

"Oh. Oh, okay," said Joseph a little hesitantly. "Utahna? I think He—that is—why don't you join us too?" This was a new thing for him to invite his wife's participation in a priesthood matter. And Utahna tentatively placed her hand on top of God's, then looked at Joseph and smiled like she was finally having herself that revelation.

Jerri Shelley approached, stopping just before the camera space. It looked like there were tears shining on her cheeks.

Phil glared at her and started to ask God a question. The audience actually shushed him.

"An-nnd we'll be back," he said defiantly, signalling Marty to get the commercial going.

Leaping onstage, standing right in front of the blessing, Donahue yelled, "Welll, not everyday you get to see a Mormon God in action, is it!"

Of course, Joseph knew what Donahue was doing. He was taking his show back. God had stolen his audience, and Phil was calling back all his power. No more the ambivalent, shrugging, "I give up" Mr. Donahue. This was a man of power, lord of daytime television, the grand inquisitor of Tabloid T.V. With a flick of his wrist, he had summoned Jerri Shelley. "Break it up," he told her.

Right in the middle of the blessing, Jerri said, "I'm sorry, folks, but your time's up. We have coffee for you downstairs."

Joseph, the voice of the blessing, closed it in Jesus' name, and said to Jerri that everything was all right and he wouldn't care for coffee, which was against the Word of Wisdom, section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and she ought to read it sometime.

Jerri smiled bravely, escorting God from the proscenium. At his whispered request, she pointed Him towards the restroom, which God entered.

That was the last anyone saw of Him. When Joseph went in to check on him five minutes later, the restroom was empty.

Returning to the hallway, Joseph announced peacefully, "He done what He come to do, Utahna."

Donahue was talking to a psychiatrist on stage, a hard-looking, skinny woman with fashionably frizzed peroxide hair. "A lot of women—particularly Mormon women—take superegos to bed," she was saying, "either their own superegos or their husbands'." Donahue nodded thoughtfully. But his face, Joseph saw—even from a distance—was victorious and defiant. Phil Donahue could have been wielding an axe.

As for Joseph, he was experiencing two sensations simultaneously. A sort of numbness was spreading from his gut to his arms. This, he was

certain, was his first manifestation of acute aplastic anemia. The second sensation happened a bit lower down: Joseph wanted his wife. He could feel it: eternal potency, building up in his groin. "Worlds without number," he said reverently to himself.

He took Utahna's hand, murmuring, "Know something, honey? You are one beautiful woman, one gorgeous lady. I think I haven't been telling you like I should have. I do love you, hope you know that."

"I'm sorry if I embarrassed you," she answered, wiping her lips with a kleenex.

"I'm the one apologizing," he said, and abruptly, "Utahna, let's go have us some marital relations, d'ya think we could? Let's go make some senior citizen whoopee, whaddya say—while there's still time. You just never know."

She squeezed his hand.

Then he said, "Utahna, you name him. Or her. Our firstborn of the next life. I want you to choose the name."

Her eyes moist, she kissed his chin quickly and—more passionately—his lips.

Jerri Shelley, recovered, showed them the exit. Behind them on stage, Phil Donahue was saying, "Annd we'll be back."

When Joseph turned to see Phil one last time, Jerri said, "No, don't. Just go, Joseph. Your check's in the mail. Please, folks. Just go."

Joseph opened the door for his wife. The outside light leapt to her white hair and exploded in radiant shivers. Her eyes dazzled him. Oh, Utahna was glorious—so glorious it made him blind.

"Kiss me again," he said to her, stepping into the light. "Utahna, kiss me again!"

Dove Descending / Harlow Söderborg Clark

"I don't like it, Marden.

I don't want anyone turning me into a saint."

My father's mother felt the
pull of swollen joints contract
her into a rheumatoid shape thirty years,
shrinking as her fingers grew
knots, splayed sideways, drew
in toward the palms
"to clutch like talons at my sympathy,"
my father said, bending over the chair

of steel tubes and wheels that led
her everywhere but to the grave—
her sons and husband carried her that distance.

My father cursed the Cosmetic Resurrection of the undertaker, who
laid her straight, smoothed her
skin, wiped clear
the score of thirty years.
He hoped the undertaker hadn't usurped

the function of the trumpet,
that when it sounds,
as Grandfather reaches through well-beloved soil
to take her hand and lead her out,

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still she will uncurl
vertebra by vertebra, fingers
moving away from palms
losing knots of bone—
growing longer, no longer
talons but wings to enfold
her clutch of nine.

And they will look out over the valley awake and green,
that took such harrowing, and raise an arc of benediction
singing in their arms, then wake their children one by one.

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On the Vicissitudes of Serving in the Bishopric

Richard H. Cracroft

AFTER THE TUMULT AND THE SHOUTING DIE, AFTER THE THOUSAND CONGRATULATIONS begin to wane, after the back-slaps from stunned relatives ("Not him!?") and surprised looks of close associates ("Really? You're kidding!"), the new bishopric meets—to begin its vicissitudes.

Being in the bishopric is a tough job. I'm not just speaking of the myriad harried meetings as a bishopric, as a welfare council, or as a priesthood executive council; nor do I rehearse the interminable meetings with the stake president, the youth council, the Young Women's presidency, the troop committee; nor the thousand mini-meetings with those seeking temple recommends or, merely, wise counsel. Nor do I speak of the countless visits to hospitals, nursing homes, or jails; nor of the visits to the homes of the Saints and the Ain'ts—the homes of the disaffected, the aged, the dying, the grieving, the anguished, the disillusioned, or the bored; nor do I speak of the visits to the homes of the newcomers, or to those being called to position, or, finally, released. (All of these meetings and visits are taxing, draining, wearying—lo, even stupefying.)

And I'm not speaking of the sacrifices one must make on accepting a call to the bishopric—the sacrifice of opportunity to hold, with priesthoodly authority, one's squirming, sacrament-meeting-unfriendly-kids;

to stuff their cherubic faces with Cheerios; to exit (amidst the rare, engrossing talk), babe in arms, to change diapers on the new diaper change table in the men's room; to hold the wife's hand in church; to miss the Sunday afternoon nap (hitherto required by the Lord and a grateful stomach). Nor do I refer to receiving numberless phone calls amidst action-packed suspense movies (ratings studiously unconsulted) on HBO which one has been waiting for months to see ("No, just studying the scriptures, Sister Jones"). All of these meetings and visits and sacrifices and inconveniences are simply tribulations which any mortal must put up with, somehow, if one has been called to serve in his ward bishopric.

But these are the simple trials. When I speak of vicissitudes, I mean the real trial, the True Test, which is, after all of these activities, trying to stay awake in sacrament meeting.

I don't care if the president of the deacon's quorum, the stake, or even the Church is speaking in sacrament meeting this Sabbath afternoon: there comes a time to every red-blooded, right-thinking, straight-shooting bishopric member when his eyelids simply fail, his head waxes leaden and drops, with a prolonged sigh (that resonates somewhere between a snort and a gargle), to his chest. Being of goodwill, the heavy head attempts recovery: It jerks and snaps and sags all about the body, causing infinite amusement for the deacons on the front bench, who stop their wriggling to watch the moisture dribble down the counselor's several chins and drip at last onto his striped tie. Other youth in the congregation—up to about age twenty-five—discover with joy the now familiar but always exciting events playing themselves out on the stand and pay rapt attention. Conversely, the drama evokes only sympathy from those over twenty-five, who manage to catch glimpses of the show between their own head nods and body tremors. Of course, part of the vicissitudes is the agonizing spiritual and physical discomfort of the consciences-mitten bishoprickers themselves.

Still, the Lord suffers it. Perhaps he suffers it because a lesson can be learned. Yes, despite the quality of the sermon (still being droned out in the foreground), a sermon is always at work behind the preacher, as the brethren and sisters emerge from their own semicomas to grasp that the bishop and his counselors, their file leaders and examples, are sleeping in meeting again.

What an equalizing sense flows over each of us in the congregation! What a warm feeling of Christian tolerance floods us as we realize that the bishop himself is once more slipping into well-earned sleep, baptizing himself by total immersion in the arms of Lethe, ridding himself of wearying cares gathered while serving us, his little flock.

Verily, verily, there is a law irrevocably decreed in every LDS congregation that the bishop who nods in church will soon have his congregation sitting firmly in his favor; for, verily, sleeping on the stand is a welcome sign of mortality amidst immortality, a glimpse into the humanness of a great man.

Understandably, then, a certain sadness sweeps that same congregation when the nodding bishopric begins to shield its collective frailties with various deceptive guises—the eyes closed, as if in thoughtful concentration on the subject; the head bent forward, resting on the hands, as if contemplating the problems of the ward; or the open-eyes glaze, a look which can be variously interpreted as seeing beyond the veil to a Hidden Truth, or as a penetrating glimpse into the heart of the Poor Sinner in the congregation (always the one on the next row).

Of course, these deceits are not appreciated by the sound congregation. Give the brethren and sisters the solid head nod, the honest drop into deep sleep, and that bishop or counselor will have won the unfeigned devotion of the ward.

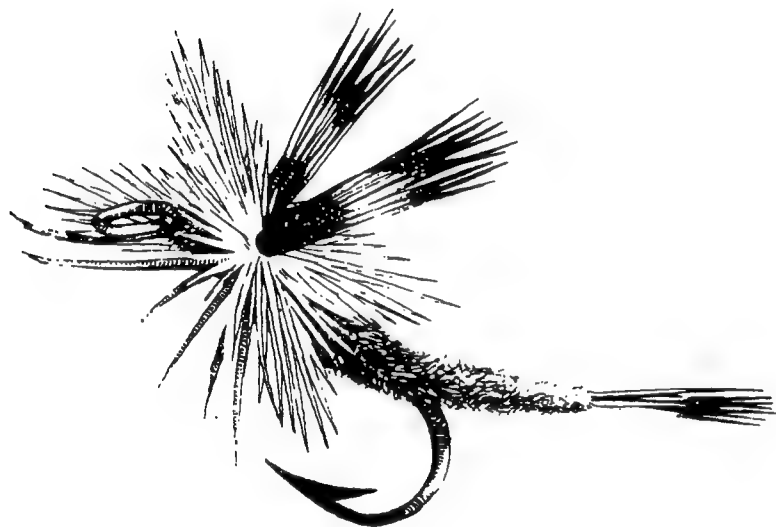
And glorious day is that Sunday when the bishop is yawningly followed in quick succession by his counselors. This event is called, by the Best Authorities, Three-of-a-Kind. Only occasionally does one en-

counter a Straight, which includes the clerks; though I recall having heard of a Royal Flush, in which sleep also swept, during an otherwise not-too-memorable ward conference, the entire stake presidency. I have yet to hear (though it has doubtless happened) of a Full House, which includes the whole congregation, for there are significant evidences that the speaker is still awake as are all of the babies.

The modern bishop in Israel may rely on computers, fax machines, videotapes, and crack teams of home and visiting teachers to woo the Saints to rectitude, but to be truly successful he must shun No-Doz, pinching himself, and other aforementioned deceits, and acknowledge his frailties like a man. In this chaotic world of uncertainty, the old verities must not be altered or assailed. Amidst political scandal, economic turmoil, rumors of war, riots, and upheaval, it gives every Latter-day Saint, from nodding head to sleepy bottom, a welcome sense of security and immutability in knowing that on this Sunday afternoon at 1:45, one's entire bishopric, looking like a trio exercising their stiff necks, will ponder the inscrutable nature of the eternities in a delightfully archaic arm-chair fashion. Bless 'em Lord; bless 'em all.

Duck Hunting / Christopher Robbins

It was strange, that black water suction,
dragging hip-waders through mud.
What did he have to tell me? That ducks
wouldn't make it through the winter.
Couldn't I see that. "Shoot them," he said.
Two mallards paddling, tall grass and
Indian paintbrush their haven.
A buck, a hen, green glistening, black mud
in the background. A rifle is a hard thing to carry
when each step is a lunge forward, mud pulling
your ankles from your legs. I got halfway;
saw the mallard through the grass, paddling
towards the brook. "Shoot it," he said, and I did.
Shot its bill right off. Left it hanging by a strand
of sinew. "Shoots high and left," he said.
"Better take him again."
Take him I did,
With my hands, and rung his neck.



MONTE CRISTO

Eugene England

I PICKED UP FRANK AT HIS MOTHER'S HOME IN OGDEN AT 7:00 A. M. BY 7:30 we were well up Ogden Canyon, with the sun full in our eyes each time we made a turn to the east. Frank's body swayed with each turn, and flashes of light crossed his face. By the time we reached Huntsville, the sun was a good four fingers above Monte Cristo, the broad range of mountains where we were heading. The canyon opened out into a wide valley of alfalfa fields just coming into bloom and fields of young wheat not quite headed out. The slanted light glinted from the dew and the irrigation ditches. The light caught the leaves on the east side of the cottonwood trees in bright green flashes and then cast huge, green-black pools of shadow to the west.

As we curved left along the east side of Huntsville, watching for the South Fork turnoff to the right, I asked if we could take time to go by President McKay's old home. Frank said yes, and I turned left at 500 south, then north to the pioneer home where David O. McKay, President of the Church during our youth, had grown up. Someone is preserving the gabled, white stucco house and its former farmyard, now just grass and rows of huge cotton woods along the ditch banks. As I turned right and headed east up the South Fork road, I told Frank about hearing Presi-

dent McKay's last General Conference address, in October 1968, when he talked about trying to get a spiritual witness of the truth of Joseph Smith's mission when he was a boy here in Huntsville. I pointed at the sagebrush-covered hills to the north. "He said he rode his horse out onto those foothills and knelt and begged the Lord for some manifestation, but that when he got up he always had to admit nothing had happened."

Frank remembered that I had mentioned that in a sacrament meeting right after he had come to St. Olaf. "Joanie and I were both amazed that a future prophet—despite being a young boy—had not had a testimony and that he had to try so long without getting one. You wanted to make a point about sticking it out and serving in the Church, but the main thing we felt was worry. If it was so hard for him, what about us?"

Frank had been hired by the Spanish department at St. Olaf, the Lutheran college in Northfield, Minnesota, a year after I had become its Dean of Academic Affairs and had been called as president of the Mormon branch in that area. He and Joan had just come from a year studying in Spain, with no Mormon congregation nearby. They had met the year before that as students at Weber State in Ogden. Because they had left for Spain right after her conversion and their marriage, they had never really had a "normal" Church experience. Both had seemed to me overly precise and self-conscious, emotionally reserved, self-protective. My sacrament talk, I remembered, had been aimed at them, a plea to get involved, to experience Church service and communion with common people in common struggles, as well as the study and self-reflection they had focused on in college and in Spain.

President McKay's point, which I had probably belabored, was that he didn't get his spiritual assurance by pleading directly. The witness came later, he said, "as a natural sequence to the performance of duty." After he had gone on a mission—which was not out of personal conviction but because his parents said it would be right—he received his spiritual mani-

festation during a missionary conference in Scotland. The guardian angels of the missionaries had become visible to him there, and the knowledge he had sought had come, not through seeking but as a gift while he was serving others.

"I probably overdid it," I said. I remembered how worried I had been about them both. I had called her to be a Primary teacher and Frank to be an adviser to the young men. At first they had struggled to do things by the book and in perfect order, and only gradually had learned to relax. Joan got to know a red-haired boy in her Primary class whose Irish mother worked all night as a janitor at Carleton college, across the river from St. Olaf, and then came home to care for an abusive, alcoholic husband and get the three children through the day. Frank became friends with another boy, Tim McBride, who at fourteen had left his single mother and the younger children to make it on his own doing odd jobs. One Sunday morning when we went for our branch presidency meeting, we found Tim sleeping in the chapel. His friends had dropped him off the night before and he had crawled through a window to be there when Frank came.

Frank and Joan had gradually let down their guard, despite what I said, and in "natural sequence to the performance of duty" had found themselves loving, being hurt, making mistakes, being forgiven, and having experiences that brought them spiritual conviction. After a while Frank became one of my two counselors, and became a friend. When I left St. Olaf in 1975, he was called as branch president. Now, a year later, while he was visiting his mother for a week, he was going to teach me how to fly fish.

He felt the best place was the south fork of the Ogden River, high in the Monte Cristo range where the river was difficult to reach but full of native cutthroat that Frank said were pretty easy to fool. He said the best time was about at summer solstice, after spring runoff and before the river

dried up too much. So he had arranged to visit his mother, who was widowed and living alone in Ogden, during that time.

As we continued up South Fork canyon, I pointed out a string of tiny cabins, below us to the right, along the river. One belonged to Charlotte's Aunt Annie, and our family had stayed there a few times. I told Frank how one day I was casting a Meps spinner tipped with salmon eggs into a big curving hole back of the cabin, and our children were riding rubber tubes down an easy stretch of water up-river. I had warned them not to come down around the bend where I was because the water swept under a pile-up of logs there, cutting out a hole six to eight feet deep. I was having no luck and had just changed to a yellow triple teaser, when I looked up to see my six-year-old daughter, Jane, alone on a small tube, heading into the bend. I froze, watching her laugh in delight as the tube sped into the current, then launched myself across the hole, fishing vest pulling me down, and just managed to grab the tube and kick backwards before it went under the logs. Jane wasn't frightened until I reached her, then she screamed and grabbed my hair. The next morning, our twelve-year-old son, Mark, got up at dawn, took my outfit—the yellow triple teaser still on—and with one cast into the wading pond next to the cabin caught a two-pound German brown.

Right after we passed Aunt Annie's, a road branched off right to the Causey Dam on the South Fork, but we continued up the main road, which follows Beaver Creek and goes over Monte Cristo into Wyoming so we could fish South Fork far above the dam. Frank told me he had grown up fishing the "Narrows" of South Fork, which were not then submerged under Causey Reservoir. Once, after finals at Weber State, he had gone up early one morning, parked his car on Causey Creek below the Boy Scouts' Camp Kiesel and headed up the trail to South Fork above the cliffs of the Narrows. As he got up on the first ridge, he could see flashlights below where the trail crossed the Causey Creek. He knew a

small river like South Fork would be ruined for fly fishing that day if others got there first, so he went off the trail to the left and walked quickly across a suspended pipeline, about a foot in diameter, thirty yards long and about 100 feet above the creek, then dashed up to the trail ahead of the flashlights.

"I was determined—and selfish," Frank laughed. "It's too bad that stretch of South Fork is gone forever. It stayed good most of the summer that far down. Now we have to go up into the headwaters, and it's only good for a bit. I just hope we're not too early in the season to get in. It's been a wet year." Frank was speaking as when I first knew him—quickly, accelerating toward the ends of sentences and letting his voice drop a little, so you had to listen with increasing focus. When he was hired at St. Olaf, some administrators were worried that students would miss what he was saying. I had been listening for a couple of days, and I assured them I thought students would make the effort, that they'd quickly find it worth while trying a little harder to hear him.

About five miles up the foothills of Monte Cristo, Frank directed me onto a logging road to the right. Frank was worried that there might still be deep mud in spots, so I had offered to drive our new Jeep Wagoneer. At first it was easy going, the road mainly graveled, but after about three miles we turned right onto a small dirt road and through an open gate in a cattle fence and began to find water in all the low spots. I got out and turned the lugs on the front wheels to give us four-wheel drive, and we did fine. But then the pools got deeper, some extending for many yards, with deep mud continuing for a quarter mile through the meadows and even up onto ridges.

Frank looked worried, especially where the wheeltracks had been eroded by the spring runoff to a depth of two feet on the slopes and I had to straddle the ruts and could only make my way from side to side—when I had to avoid trees and bushes close to the road—by finding a place

where the ruts were shallow. Each time I turned Frank was thrown along the seat, from my shoulder to the window or back. I pretended to know what I was doing, but felt certain that if we slipped off into a rut or high-centered in one of the deep pools I splashed through we would be stuck for a long time. I kept up smalltalk, admiring the flowers and occasional glimpses across the meadows and canyons back down towards Huntsville. The flowering bluebells thickly covered acres of meadow and gradually merged into the sunflowers bursting out on the dryer hills. We were going downhill and I was aware that we might not be able to make it back up the slippery road.

As we came out of a grove of pines onto a rocky south-facing slope heating up in the sun, Frank said, "Let's leave the car here. The road goes down towards the river for a ways but it's too steep to come back up in this mud, even with four-wheel drive. I've always walked from here, and it's not too bad." He put his thermos of grape juice and ice down between the seats out of the sun. "We'll need that after we've hiked back up."

We got our poles and vests and lunch bags and headed out. I had a new Garcia fly rod and a Pflueger reel, and the evening before Frank had helped me tie up the delicate fly-fishing tackle and coached me in basic casting on his mother's lawn. He had shown me how to tie a "nail knot." It uses a small finishing nail as a base for a series of loops in order to attach line to leader in a continuous curve rather than a hinge and to transfer the power of a cast smoothly out to the leader. He made up his own eight-foot leader from sections, starting with two feet of .016 inch diameter nylon, with a two-foot tippet of .004 inch, two-pound test, nylon. He said for these less sophisticated fish I could get by with a 4x tapered leader and a tippet like his.

On the back lawn of his mother's home, Frank had tied a fluff of wool at the end of our leaders and stuck a book under my right arm. Then he taught me to cast, first by showing, then watching and correcting my arm

motion as I practiced. The book kept my elbow in and helped me concentrate on using just my forearm, getting distance through the timing and rhythm of my wrist action. "Accuracy will have to come tomorrow on the stream," Frank said. He showed me the flies to buy on the way home, number 16 Renegades and Adams. The Renegade looks like no insect in the world but is perhaps the best general fly, with a dark green-black body and two hackles sticking out in circular fringes, a white one forward that helps novices locate the fly on the water, and a brown one back. The Adams is grey with a brown hackle, a subtler fly, harder to see, but good in most situations, from canyon streams to big, heavy water like the Yellowstone and Madison.

As I was pulling out of his mother's driveway, Frank had said, "I almost forgot to have you get some fly dressing. They have a liquid form now, a bottle you can dunk the fly in, and even a spray-on, but I prefer the white rub-on paste made by Mucilin." I decided to get that.

My father had learned to fish as a boy on a homestead in Arbon Valley south of Pocatello, Idaho, where success meant having something for his family to eat with their bread and mustard greens. He had learned to be effective, a "meat fisherman" without much concern for style. I was never as effective as him—and my life never so hard that I had to be. Even when we fished for food when I was six and seven during the last years of the Depression, he could catch limits for both of us if I didn't concentrate. I had seen his split bamboo fly rod and a box of flies, including some huge concoctions with names like Royal Coachman and Mickey Finn, but I had never seen him fly fish. I had learned only how to use spinners and other lures, worms, and cheese and whatever else would get fish on the bank or in the boat the fastest.

I once saw my father, unable to tempt a five-pound brookie in a beaver dam with any of his lures, jump right into the pond and trap the big fish against the sticks of the dam until he could catch it with his hands. I still

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carry as an emblem, snagged into the upper pocket of my fishing vest, one of his specially-designed flies, a double Woolly Worm with a huge red spot on its tail.

Frank is a stylist. He had learned the techniques and emotions of classic angling, partly from his father-in-law, one of the grumpy non-Mormons who live in southern Idaho and barely endure the somewhat overweening Saints, who have become a majority there. Some of Parley Wallington's pain in losing his daughter to a Mormon had been mitigated when his son-in-law went flyfishing with him in the large spring creeks coming out of the lava walls of the Snake River Canyon near Twin Falls—and could soon match him in care and skill.

Leaving the Jeep behind us, Frank and I started down the steep road toward South Fork from where we parked the Jeep. I carried my fly-rod as I had learned to carry my casting rod. To save time I usually just left the last tackle on after a fishing trip and broke the rod down into two sections, hooking whatever lure I was using to the handle of the reel. I had carried my rods in cars and boats, and put them in closets that way for years—and had lost lures, tangled my lines, and broken tips. Frank, however, had clipped off his practice “fly” the night before, reeled in his line and leader, and put the reel in his fishing vest pocket. Then he had put the three sections of his rod into an aluminum tube, which he had padded with electrician's tape on the end so he could use it for a walking stick.

After a mile of switchbacks the road angled into a draw and ended at a man-made pond that collected water for cattle from a spring just above it. When we drank from the spring my teeth ached from the cold water while the sun burned hot on my shoulders. We picked up a small trail down through the aspens at the bottom of the draw, and gradually it seemed cooler, the overflow stream from the pond constantly rippling and available, dew brushing on our hands from the grasses and stretches

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of wildflowers opening up from time to time along the path. The variation of color was startling after the groves of green pines and the masses of bluebells and sunflowers in the higher meadows. There were white-topped yarrow and fluorescent orange Indian paintbrush, large pink penstemons, with an occasional white-flowered variant. In one dry, sunny spot grew two sego lilies, each just a light green stem with a three-petaled white blossom on top, but with a surprise inside—chartreuse at the heart, violet stamens, and at the base of each petal a dark purple-black arch, like a painted eyebrow over an eye-spot of green. I wanted to pull one up to taste the bulb that Mormon pioneers had sometimes eaten to survive, but it seemed wrong.

After another mile, Frank, who had begun to trot and moved out fifty feet ahead as the path moved up a sidehill, turned back with a smile. His voice was too soft, but I could see his lips forming “Can you hear the river?” I could hear only the slight wind in the pines below us. As I came up to Frank at the ridge I could see, in the canyon opening below, patches of moving water, light blue-green over the orange bottom, the patches to the east reflecting dots of silver, and could hear the water—just like the sound of the wind in the pines at first but more complex, a variety of undertones that sorted out into specific tones as we got closer, one for each splashing falls.

Gradually I could see further up and down the South Fork canyon; the river had slowly cut down through a great layer of limestone from the ancient seas as the Wasatch mountains sheered up from the tectonic plate to the west. The north slope had eroded far back from the stream, with a few small grey cliffs but mainly broken rock and topsoil at an angle of repose that allowed scrub oak and grasses and pine groves. But the south slope was much more abrupt, the grey limestone breaking straight down for hundreds of feet in places. As we moved down I could see straight across into the cliff face and make out ledges that ran level in both direc-

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tions out of sight, some of them with water oozing out and down the cliff walls, one that brought out an iron solution that had oxidized in long loops of gold down the face.

The trail got steeper, and I began to think of the return hike in the late afternoon sun, but Frank's excitement soon caught me up and we nearly ran the last half mile and out into the river. We knelt right in the water to bathe our heads and necks.

While Frank got his rod set up and his fly on, I practiced casting up the stream into a large hole, where I normally would have dropped a worm. I saw the fly floating on the water a few times, but it usually disappeared when I cast. Frank came up and said, "You're standing right where some of the best fish are—were." He took me upstream and showed me how to cast to eddies along the riffles in the wider gravelled areas of the river, how to find the places where fish were able to stay without much effort and watch for food passing by in the current—or for flies landing on the calm water above them. He pointed to a spot twenty feet beyond us. "See the fish there." I couldn't, but I didn't say so, just watched. He started playing out his line in false casts above the water, pulling from the reel with his left hand as he brought the line back, then letting it go out with the cast, three feet further each time. He did this five times, until the fly, which I could barely see looping over at the end of his cast, was stopping about two feet ahead of where he had pointed.

The next cast the fly dropped and floated on still water and then started going to the right into the current, while the line floated on the slower water to the left. The fly disappeared in a tiny swirl, Frank's hand jerked back, and his rod bent as the orange line was pulled swiftly across and up the stream. He played the fish back and forth twice across the riffles, then quickly down to a sandy bank just below us. Reeling up and shifting his rod to his left hand to hold the fish in still water, he grasped it in his right hand, just behind the gills.

"Don't want to tire it out," he said, then lifted the fish up and slipped the hook from its gristly upper lip, held it sideways for me to see the gold and rust-red smudges below each gill that give the fish its name, the same red continuing in a quarter inch band down each side, divided by a dark, blood-red line. He held the fish in a quiet eddy while it started to breathe water again; I could see the light grey-brown back, mottled with black spots, that created its camouflage against the sand and gravel of the riffles. When Frank let it go, the fish stayed still for a few seconds, quietly breathing, then it became a swift flash of shadow up the stream.

Frank looked at my fly and said, "I forgot to tell you about flattening down the barb on the hook so you won't hurt the fish. You'll lose a few but won't leave sores that get infected and kill them. You also need to dress your fly." He took out a tiny pair of needle-nose pliers and showed me how to gently press down the barb without bending and weakening the main hook. "If you're not careful, the hook will break off there where the barb was, and you'll be *too* safe." I practiced on two other Renegades in my fly box and then got out the little round tin of Mucilin fly floatant. It looked like Vaseline but wasn't nearly as sticky. Frank showed me how to dry my fly by squeezing it between folds of my handkerchief, then take a little of the Mucilin between finger and thumb and rub it thoroughly over the fly, getting the layer thin enough that it didn't mat down the hackles.

I cast in the riffles without doing any good, while Frank caught two more fish. He said, "Try the lower end of a hole, like the one under that falls, but down at the end of the pool, where the water starts to speed up again. Cast up onto the edge of the current and let it float out into the quiet water." I tried but lost sight of the fly, so when the swirl came to the right of where I was looking I jerked too late; the fish had already felt the hook and let go. I started upstream, but Frank said, "Try it again, there are more fish there. And these cutthroats aren't too smart. He may take it again."

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I kept my eye on the fly as it floated at the edge of the current, trying to learn how to see it after it started floating down. A shadow came up under it and the fly disappeared. I was surprised but jerked in time and had my first fish.

I caught four or five at the lower ends of pools and holes, gradually learning how to see the fly as soon as it dropped, follow it on the current, and set the hook when it disappeared. My nerves got set so tight that sometimes I would jerk too quickly and pull the fly right out of the fish's mouth. Once, I continued the jerk-back into a backcast and then cast out again into the same spot, where another fish took the fly. But I triggered too quickly again and continued into another backcast and once more laid the fly out softly. Again the fly disappeared, but I waited a beat and set the hook perfectly.

The fish came straight up out of the water, the largest I had seen that day, maybe eleven inches and thick-bodied, with the red stripe clearly visible. I was so elated that I forgot to strip the line back and keep my rod tip high as the fish made a rush across the stream toward me. The unbarbed hook could only stay in place under pressure, and as the fish moved past me downstream, shaking the slack line, the hook came loose. As I finally pulled the line tight, the fly flipped straight back and hooked into my sleeve.

I sat right down on the bank, letting the adrenalin ebb away. Frank had been watching, but merely said, "That was a good fish. Come and try this next hole." He led me through a high mass of willows on the left bank, where we had to hold our rods high and keep ourselves out of the tangle by pushing over the bigger willow stems with our feet and stepping on them from one to the next. On the right the south wall of the canyon closed in to the river so that when we came out into a small meadow of grass and pipestem sedge we were looking across at a deep hole carved under the rock wall, which continued up maybe four hundred feet. Pines

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grew down to the water ahead on the left so that the river seemed to come out of a dark cavern, with a sharp line where the sun, now approaching noon, broke straight down over the rock and across the river.

Frank motioned that the hole was mine but I whispered, "Go ahead," and moved to his left to watch, feeling a strange reluctance to cast into the cavern and yet overwhelming desire to see what might happen. Frank false cast a few times, the tiny grey Adams curving in a fifty-foot figure eight in the sunlight and disappearing further into darkness at the front of each cast. Then he let it drop and began slowly gathering line in his left hand. Just before the fly floated out of the dark into the bright water at the end of the hole, I saw a shadow coming up slowly from nearly four feet below, then a quick rush the last several inches and Frank struck just as the fish lifted the fly from the water. I knew I would have struck too soon.

While he landed and released the fish, my breathing calmed down, but I wanted to stop for a while and suggested, "Let's have a sandwich." Since we didn't keep any fish, the large pockets at the back of our fishing vests made handy lunch baskets, and we each took out cheese sandwiches and apples my wife, Charlotte, had fixed. I picked some watercress from a brook to add to our sandwiches, knowing the tang would go well with the mild cheddar. Frank used his collapsible tin cup that leaked slightly, but I lay on my belly to drink, putting my face deep into the pool where the brook opened into the river.

After lunch we moved up where the river came out from the edge of the wall and was hemmed in by chokecherry bushes on both sides. Frank wanted to teach me to roll cast. We started below the bushes and came up the shallower right side. Frank let out about fifteen feet of line and leader, with his fly floating to the left and back of him. Without backcasting, which would have hooked the chokecherries, he held his rod straight across the stream and with a quick clockwise turn of his wrist flipped the

fly up into an eddy on the other side. As the fly floated down past him, he moved upstream a few feet, letting his rod tip follow the fly and then, just before it began to drag at the end of the fifteen feet, he flipped it upstream again, this time into an eddy a few feet higher. He continued this for about five flips and then invited me to try. I was awkward the first few casts, not getting the fly upstream very far, but on the fourth cast the fly disappeared and I struck just right. "Good student," Frank said, clearly surprised, and then left me to work on my own.

We had decided to quit at three, leaving us time to hike out to the Jeep—and still have plenty of daylight in case we got stuck. Frank had agreed it would be all right to eat two of the fish, so I had brought some tinfoil and butter, which I had left to cool in the little overflow stream at the bottom of the draw we had come down. At two o'clock we hiked down to a beaver pond, planning to fish back up the river.

As we came out of the pines above the pond, a deer was going up a steep trail across from us that led into the cliffs. She turned and calmly watched us as we watched back, hardly breathing. I could see her dark nose and eyes and the huge grey-gold ears turned full toward us, the sun shining through the hair along the edges. Then she turned slowly and walked behind a boulder.

We stood there watching the fish, who must have been startled by the deer, as they slowly came back from the river above and from under the banks into the clear, calm beaver pond. We knew they were too spooked to take a fly, even if we could make a perfect presentation, so we started in the riffles just above the pond and continued up the river. We took turns with the holes and stretches of riffle, silently leap-frogging, not watching each other fish. The only sound, over that of the river, was the drone of a jet passing high above toward the Salt Lake airport.

We got back right at 3:00. Just downstream from where the draw we had followed from the Jeep reached the river, a fallen log had produced

a long, narrow hole down the center, with riffles to the left. "Show me what you can do," Frank said, and I ignored the hole, working up the riffles, and landed two nine-inchers in quick succession. As I unhooked each, I grasped it upside down with the head protruding out two inches between my middle and forefingers and rapped its nose sharply on a rock. This killed the fish instantly.

Frank continued fishing around the bend while I found a sandy bank and gutted the two fish. With the small blade of my pocketknife, I sliced each from anus to gills and then stuck the knife upright in the sand to clean later. I hooked my left forefinger through the mouth and my thumb up in front of the gills to close with my finger. This gave me leverage to break out the front cartilage, where both sets of gills were attached, with my right forefinger and thumb and then continue pulling downward to strip out the two front fins just behind the gills and then all the inner organs. Then I held each fish in my left hand and pushed my right thumb up the backbone, breaking the membrane there that covers the main blood vessel and stripping out the blood to the front, washing the fish in the stream to take away the clotting blood.

I retrieved the butter, kept hard in the cold water, went up on the ridge overlooking the river where we had first come down, and built a fire of dead pine branches in a small stone firecircle I had seen on the way down. While the fire was burning into embers, I poured out flour and salt and pepper onto some tinfoil and rolled each fish in it, then watched Frank fishing below me, admiring the intense efficiency of his movements as he looked up river, moved into position, cast and struck, played and released.

I suddenly realized I had needed to urinate for some time but had put it off, driven by the excitement of fishing and the job of preparing the fire and the fish. Now I felt the need intensely, from my belly down through my thighs. I moved over so some low elderberry bushes hid me from

Frank, opened my fly, and let loose with great pleasure. Just as I did so, a hummingbird whirred up the river and hovered directly in front of me, facing me so closely that I could see glints in his carmine throat. On the heart-shaped inside of his tail, that bobbed up and down to give him stability, were black-tipped feathers with an inner ring of white. I stared back at him from a foot away, startled out of time; his head remained perfectly still, the eyes fixed on me, in the midst of the whirring wings and bobbing tail. Then I realized he had mistaken my father's special fly on my vest for a strange, new, red-spotted flower. After a moment, showering glints of green from his back, he whirred off so fast his wings rattled.

When the fire had burned down to red and white embers and no smoke, I called Frank up, spread the butter inside each fish, wrapped it in the foil and placed it between the embers and a flat rock face at the edge of the firecircle. I gave each fish about two minutes in this little oven and took it out of the foil steaming. We ate with our fingers, licking the little puddles of butter and juice off the foil. The seasoned skin we lifted off first had the strongest taste, the bread-white flesh underneath mild as Dover sole without its sauce. We ate in silence, casting the long-ribbed skeletons that we lifted out entire into the bushes behind us and licking the foil until it was clean enough to keep.

I felt the danger of not getting out soon and was anxious to leave. But Frank lay back on the needles under a pine and talked about fishing. He told about going to Montana while he was in college and being in camp with a group of world-class fly fishermen, the kind who wrote books and gave expensive lessons and guided excursions. He was just beginning to learn and so one day secretly followed one of the most prestigious fishermen as he went out on a large and difficult river. All day Frank stayed under cover and watched the expert make perfect approaches and presentations, constantly changing his fly patterns and sizes. Frank was

astonished at the man's skill, the length and variety of his casts, the softness of the fly descending, even before the line touched the water, the way he could cast across the current to an eddy and keep a fly in a natural-looking float for five or six seconds, constantly "mending" his line by deftly flipping the leader back upriver before it could start to drag the fly. But the great angler didn't get a single strike. The fish were not taking anything on that day on that stretch of river.

That night in camp Frank overheard the others in the party, who had gone out on the lake that day, ask how the man had done, and he replied, "Oh, I only got twelve." By the end of the story, Frank's voice had quickened and softened, turned in on itself, so I could hardly hear him. "Why couldn't such a good fisherman simply tell the truth?"

We were silent and I thought about the first time I had watched Frank fish. We had moved from Northfield to a farm house that had been willed to the college along with eighty acres of ground and a fifteen-acre woodlot with a small stream running through it all year, enough to support trout, something very rare in southern Minnesota. Right after Frank had joined the faculty I invited him out to fish with me. We each took one side of the stream, fishing with worms, and I moved on ahead but then circled back and hid behind a clump of elderberries in order to watch his meticulous, thorough approach to each hole, different from anything I had seen before.

Frank next told me about a friend he had made that year in Rochester, about sixty miles from Northfield, where our Church's district headquarters were and where Frank went for monthly meetings. The man was a counselor in the district presidency and assigned to supervise the Faribault Branch, which meant he interviewed Frank each month and visited the branch often. "He was a gentle man, softspoken. He liked bringing his wife and coming in fast Sunday. "We're still keeping up that custom you started of having a potluck lunch to break our fast after tes-

timony meeting." He learned about our problems with a congregation spread out forty miles in every direction and only one or two experienced families, most of the rest new converts.

"As I came to know him better he invited Joanie and me to stay at their home when we went down to Rochester for district conference. We met his daughter, a senior in high school and a cheerleader, and he mentioned once that a football player from a broken family had dated her a few times, had gone to church and on a few family outings with them, clearly attracted not only to her but to her secure home.

"Then one Sunday Lynn missed a meeting he should have been conducting. It was announced that his daughter had just died that morning. She had tried to stop dating the boy and still be a friend, had even kept including him in family doings, but he had persisted, continued to pressure her, then joined the army and went away for awhile. That Saturday he had returned on leave and tried to get her to date him, had even parked outside early in the evening until they had the sheriff ask him to leave. Later he called and asked to come by to pick up something he had given her before, and when she let him in he stabbed her and wounded a friend who had gone to the door with her. Then he fled. Lynn took his daughter to the hospital and blessed her, but she had died that morning.

"The next day, on Monday, Lynn and Kathy went to the high school and talked to the students in an assembly about what had happened. They spoke openly about their anger and grief. They also reminded the students that two families were grieving that day, their own and the young man's, and they should remember both. Nearly 2,000 students and town members came to the funeral and the burial. Lynn and Kathy stayed for hours at the cemetery, embracing the students, comforting and being comforted. Lynn told me later, 'I don't want grief and anger to destroy us. I want to forgive.' And they got help—from their own prayers and

those of Church members and from a psychologist who came and worked with the whole family.

"About a year later I asked Kathy how she was doing. She said, 'I am a happy woman who cries a lot.'"

Frank's voice had become so low he had to repeat that, then coughed and went silent. I waited a while and Frank asked about teaching religion at the LDS Institute at Weber State. I told him how I had been asked by the bishop of one of my students to speak in sacrament meeting at their Ogden ward. I had talked about how hard it is to accept the modern revelations against materialism, how hard to live the covenants we make in the temple to consecrate everything we have to building the Kingdom of God. I read from the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants that announce that the world lies in sin because one person possesses more than another and that warn we must be equal in temporal things or we cannot be equal in spiritual blessings.

The next week, the director of the Institute came into the reception area where I was checking my box for announcements and said, "I need to talk to you about a complaint about your talk last Sunday." I thought he was joking and joked back and started to leave, but he told me to come into his office. I learned that a member of the ward where I had talked had called Church headquarters and tried to get me fired. The complaint had been referred back to the director.

I told Frank how angry and humiliated I had felt and still did, because that fellow "Saint" had not talked to me but had gone over my head to some authority, clearly interested mainly in punishment—and also because that authority had taken charge of the complaint and pursued it, rather than telling to complainer to talk to me. I had described my talk to the director, who had agreed that it seemed to be orthodox enough, but, he finally said, "It's best not to talk about controversial things like wealth."

Eugene England

The director told me the name of the man who had not liked my talk, and I went to see him, defensive and full of desire to condemn him. I found him a very amiable person, a collector of toy soldiers which he displayed in gorgeous arrays all over his house. He said his anger had been aroused at me because the ward, in a declining part of Ogden, was full of widows and elderly couples on fixed incomes, and I had seemed to him to be accusing the ward of not doing enough for the Church, asking them to sacrifice more.

When we packed up I bit the fly from my leader, reeled up the line and put the reel in my back vest pocket, and carried the rod carefully in sections. It took almost an hour of hard hiking, and we stopped often to drink from the stream until we reached the little reservoir. We finished in one long push from there to the car and then sat on the tailgate drinking Frank's grape juice straight from the spigot of the gallon-size Coleman thermos, looking up at the slopes of Monte Cristo, now turning golden in the westering sun. It wasn't until we put our gear in the back that I noticed I'd left my knife in the river bank.

Frank and I had one more trip to South Fork, the next year. The year after that I tried to take Charlotte and my children in but found the gate locked where we had turned off the upper logging road—I learned later that the Deseret Cattle Company had decided to keep people out. It was too far to walk to the river, and we turned back. I think often of Monte Cristo and the river that flows on with no human visitation, without the arc of Frank's perfect cast and without his softening voice. I think of deer that come down to the beaver ponds to drink and how they spook the fish, how the hummingbird appears and is gone. I think of those red-throated fish measuring the pond in their shadowed flight, swift as the jet shadows measure, in the silent noons, that continuing valley.

Sole Makers / Russell Moorehead

I wonder if I can still heal myself?
I've done it once before,
back when I cut my palm open
trying to be your blood brother.

We slid a fresh blade into the utility knife
to keep things clean. The edge skated
deeper than my skin. You pulled it shut

with a fish hook and dental-floss,
wrapped our secret with a gauze bow
and doused it with Bactine. We never told
a soul as we watched the scar shrink away
into a thick wrinkle.
But we never got around to cutting you.

We slipped out of church to jump the cliffs.
The Potomac moved fast and brown
between the states and painted
the palisades wet just below
the high water mark.

Standing on the edge in nothing
but Weejuns, we jumped—
you first. One hundred feet down
arms slapped red we swam back
to the soft bank. Hitting the water

ripped your leather soles straight off.
We pulled a junk tire from the trunk
of the Plymouth, cut tread
the shape of your feet with a coping saw,
tacked them to your loafers
with contact cement. Three years

or thirty-thousand miles later we raced
across the states by motorcycle
taking shifts. One drove
while the other slept, wrists locked
around the other's waist, making it
to the wedding with six hours to spare.

Your law was to stop for every hitchhiker,
and tip the musicians. Buy a flower
from the woman and let the shoe shine
boy give you a polish,
even if you've got your suede boots on.

They say your car rolled
three times before it hit the tree,
and that you didn't die instantly.
In fact, they say you were trying
to find a radio station when they found
you.

Book Reviews

The Paradoxical Price of Freedom: Church and Literature as "Liberating Forms," A Review of *Liberating Form: Mormon Essays on Religion and Literature* by Marden J. Clark (Aspen Books, 1992, 241 pp., \$9.95). Reviewed by Bryan Waterman.

Marden Clark retired from his position as professor of English at BYU before I started school there, but I haven't had any problems encountering him or his work. I first read Marden Clark when my younger brother mailed me *Harvest: Contemporary Mormon Poems* as a Christmas present while I was serving a mission; his "To Kevin: Newly a Missionary" moved me to deep reflection on myself and my calling. I first heard Clark read his own work at the 1992 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium, his almost cowboy sense of humor drawing me to my rural roots, the crackling sounds of his testimony apt prelude to a stirring "Pillars of My Faith" session. I first met Clark in a small Roman Catholic Church in an economically depressed corner of Las Vegas, where we gathered with roughly a hundred others to protest what Clark has called "the spiralling nuclear buildup," a "ghost in the galaxy" (*Liberating Form* 221; *Harvest* 16). And I first realized that we had become friends when, at a BYU banquet a week after the Nevada protest, he caught my attention from across the room, waving indiscreetly, his unrestrained smile signalling his recognition of the bond forged during our desert retreat.

Somewhere between Pillars of My Faith and the Nevada weekend, I made my first reading of Clark's recent collection of essays, *Liberating Form*, highlighting a few interesting passages here and there. After a more careful second reading, and much more marking, I still feel only slightly prepared to make a few observations. While ranging in date from the late 60s to the early 80s might suggest that the essays are a bit dated (a limitation Clark acknowledges), the central issues involved—the paradox of “liberating form” both in the Church and in literature—are as relevant today as they were when they first appeared in print or were delivered as addresses. In some cases they are ever-timely reminders that challenges facing contemporary Mormon academics, while seeming to isolate and marginalize, are perhaps essential to the development of healthy individuals and of quality literature.

Certainly the theme of paradox is nothing new, either to religion or to literature. The Christian tradition finds its foundation in the seeming contradiction that only by dying could Jesus bring eternal life. In Mormon tradition we have Joseph Smith's declaration that “by proving contraries, truth is made manifest.” We have the Prophet's notions of radical individualism countered by his communal experiments, or radical individualism balanced by ultimate contingency on God for our progression. But paradox is essentially a literary term; Clark borrows his title, *Liberating Form*, from a literature textbook. With literature as a framework, and his love of literature permeating these essays, he examines the paradoxes central to Mormon and mortal life, from angles and perspectives much more varied than those suggested above.

In the title essay, Clark introduces the concept of “liberating form” using X.J. Kennedy's sonnet “Nothing in heaven functions as it ought.” While Kennedy's poem employs a rigid and demanding form, its lines describing a very human but livable heaven are full of irregular beats and imperfect rhymes, while the lines on hell are, to the syllable, flawless and

mechanical. To Clark, “The form has been the means of releasing the energy in the poem” (7), and after a few more literary examples he draws the inevitable parallel:

The Church, of course, is that liberating form . . . [which] can provide . . . direction, order, meaning to our energy. The Church can liberate that energy by giving it control and form. (10-11)

But the “price of freedom,” the consequence of our liberation, is that everyone sharing the form can be liberated, too, and we run the risk of bumping into imperfect others. Without realizing this inevitability, we might blame the form, without realizing the intentions of its author. Clark's picture of imperfect Church members and leaders not quite “function[ing] as [they] ought” recalls Eugene England's longtime message that the Church is “the school of love,” imperfect intentionally, and thus able to teach us to love even the unlovable (67).

The majority of the subsequent essays pursue particular limitations of this “form,” the Church, which can be—but is never guaranteed to be—the ultimate liberator. In “Art, Religion, and the Market Place,” Clark rejects the current religious (and popular Mormon) emphasis on too sleek a form—organization gone amok. “Too often,” he writes, “[re]ligion] has sought efficiency of organization and power through organization, in the process denying the dignity and value of what it was trying to organize” (17). Extreme examples of religion “sold out” to the market place are the “notorious religion/business . . . TV hucksters” (22). Mormons run similar risks, with our culture's tendency to use gospel terms to sell products, resulting in high levels of fraud and an overabundance of Franklin planners.

Limitations also come as a natural result of human freedom, which “imposes upon us the imperative to offer our highest worship through our creativity to the God who used His freedom to create us” (49). Human limitations, combined with the overemphasis on organization, ad-

versely affect what Clark calls "the Mormon commitment to education" in what is to me the book's most compelling essay. When the "form" of the commitment to learning is overemphasized, without allowing for the natural consequences of human freedom, the commitment will be "undermined" (52). Thus the paradox of gospel axioms such as "The Glory of God Is Intelligence," coupled with rampant anti-intellectualism at BYU and the Church in general. Originally printed in 1972, the essay might have been written twenty years later; certainly few of the trends he notices have changed, and most likely they have only increased. Consider his evaluation of problems BYU academics face:

the absence of really strong creative achievement within the Church, the struggle of BYU's graduate school for support, especially on the doctorate level, . . . the Mormon "controlled press," the difficulty of scholars in getting at documents in the Church archives, the battle between faithful and scholarly history, the widespread anti-intellectual attitudes in the Church, the growth of fundamentalist religious attitudes and ultra-conservative political attitudes in the Church at large and in the BYU faculty . . . add[ing] up to . . . help produce a basically defensive attitude toward education [which] runs counter to the highest educational and creative impulses in Mormonism. (54)

Limitations on academic freedom at BYU impede the university's ability to produce men and women "capable of representing the Church in the world of ideas—all kinds of ideas" (61). Granted, "education which promotes freedom may not always produce tractable, unquestioning Mormons," and may even produce "the thoughtful dissenter," but dissenters do not deserve to be labeled enemies. "Dissent makes us examine our positions and activities. If they are really sound they should survive such examination and emerge the stronger" (64-5).

As mentioned above, the "defensive" trends Clark notices are on the rise, making his analysis all the more pertinent to contemporary readers. As Karl Sandberg, another LDS academic, notes, "the biggest change at

BYU [in the last 40 years] is a loss of confidence. . . . [I]t is assumed that the religion of the LDS community would lose in an open contest with the secular modes" (7). The remedy for this, as Clark suggests, is to allow Mormon academics to

bring all their insights, especially their particularly Mormon insights, to bear on significant problems . . . to be able to do so under the immediate auspices of the Church and its university, and to feel that the Church supports them in this work, not made to feel that they are somehow involved in subversive activities. They should be able to feel such support . . . Even . . . if the work seems inimical to apparent and immediate interests of the Church, [because] no meaningful truth and no sincere and energetic quest for truth can really be inimical to the best interests of the Church. (63)

Paradox not only arises from LDS religious life, but from our approaches to art. Clark cites in particular his attitudes toward LDS literature. Similar to Eugene England's "Dawning of a Brighter Day" (*BYU Studies* 22:2), but perhaps less hopeful in tone, Clark's humorous essays "We Have Our Standards (for Mormon Writers)," "Toward a More Perfect Order Within: Being the Confessions of an Unregenerate But Not Unrepentant Mistruster of Mormon Literature," and "Whose Yoke Is Easy?" seek to define an LDS literary criticism. Like England, Clark wonders when the prophesied LDS Shakespeares and Miltons will appear; and, like England, Clark mourns the popular literary tastes of LDS culture in general.

In "Whose Yoke Is Easy?" Clark pinpoints as the culprit Mormon culture's sell-out to American materialism. The emphasis on sleek organization—for efficiency in reaching materialistic goals—is based on an "easy version of life: of money, of education, of culture, of religion, of whatever" (205). The quest for the "easy" way out has led to streamlined, question-free Mormon doctrine, substanceless, impersonal, correlated lesson guides, and trivial, would-be literature and art of the

Saturday's Warrior and *Star Child* variety. The key concepts here are "easy" and "undemanding" (208). What Clark earlier called "the joy and glory of our humanness" demands a much more complex approach to human experience—complex meaning "genuine" more than sophisticated—true to life (49, 214).

Clark's paradox, then, when approaching LDS literature, is twofold. First, he asks, "Why not a peculiar[ly skillful and genuine] literature for a people who pride themselves on being peculiar?" (215). And second, Clark recognizes that amidst all his distrust, he has both witnessed and participated in the birth of a genuine Mormon literary movement. While genuine Mormon literature may draw negative comment from those who ignore the "liberating" in favor of emphasizing the "form" (as did those who ostracized Maureen Whipple and Juanita Brooks), Mormons must overcome the fear of honesty about ourselves and be willing to put our experiences into print. The pressure applied by the correlators, while uncomfortable at the moment, might lead in the end, ironically, to the development of literary "muscles and sinew" (93).

Clark's intriguing discussion of Mormon literature, though, leaves me aware of one of *Liberating Form's* two main weaknesses. Because most of the essays had their genesis and first delivery or printing in the 70s, they cannot account for the developments in Mormon writing over the past ten years. Surely Clark's rural sensibilities must have rejoiced at Levi Peterson's *The Backslider* and his collections of short stories, or at *Harvest*, co-edited by Marden's son and Eugene England. Released around the same time as *Liberating Form* were Terry Tempest Williams's *Refuge*, which must have appealed to Clark's distaste for nuclear weapons, and *Bright Angels and Familiars: Contemporary Mormon Stories*, a collection bringing hope for future Mormon fiction.

The second weakness is one that Clark notices himself—the limitations of the literature he has chosen to demonstrate his arguments (234).

While he apologizes for his ignorance of "folk art," though, his earlier expression of fear and distaste for postmodern literary criticism fails to recognize that "folk art" can only be considered literature because of the postmodern revolution's valuing of stories and diversity—far from the fear he had of an increasingly impersonal criticism. When Clark recounts his beautiful awakening to African-American literature, for example (149-50), I found myself wishing I could hear him comment on Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor, as he did on Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright.

But, weaknesses aside, the essays in *Liberating Form* are, have been, and will continue to be liberating. The paradoxes Clark faces and comments on are likely inbred as part of the human experience—they are the "price of freedom" (14)—and will continue to make his comments relevant far into the future. Paradoxically, if members and leaders alike would both hear and listen to what Clark has to say, the tensions between liberation and form—while never ceasing to exist—might become more bearable, increasing the opportunity to celebrate both.

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A Mormon Woman's Intimate Review: A Review of Secret Ceremonies: A Mormon Woman's Intimate Diary of Marriage and Beyond, by Deborah Laake. (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1993. 240 pp. \$20.00). Reviewed by Julie J. Nichols.

As a Mormon who lived in the same places Carol Laake did at the time of her marriages in the early seventies—the heart of Mormonism, Provo and Salt Lake City—I've lived my life influenced by much of the dogma this book protests. Thus it's interesting to me that although I agree with many of the conclusions Laake draws, and although her story is told very well, one particular aspect of her book is so distasteful it colors my entire response. That aspect is this: that she recounts (not entirely accurately) as if they were lurid and horrendous details of the LDS temple ceremony, a ceremony I consider in many ways healing and sacred. My sense is that most LDS readers will find this as offensive as I do, so it seems worthwhile to point out what I feel are some partially redeeming aspects of this memoir/expose in order to justify reading it in the first place, even while I think most mainstream LDS readers won't.

Many religions have ceremonies which, when looked at through the lens of the nonbeliever, appear strange, even abhorrent. It would be easy, I think, to question, mock, and invalidate nearly any ritual, from the casting of Wiccan circles to the highest Catholic mass, if one chose to stay outside the realm of the faithful. I suppose this is what "participant-observer" fieldwork is all about in anthropology: those who study and write about the customs and rituals of a people agree that they cannot write about it fairly unless they do so from the point of view of those who participate fully.

Now, Laake participated in the temple ceremony, and supposedly in all that led up to it, so shouldn't she be considered a valid writer about it? Not to my thinking. This book is not meant to be either a scholarly work

or a missionary tract. It's an expose, by the very nature of exposes, everything is presented as either black or white, either good or bad. Though Laake admits that she was woefully underprepared for her first temple experience, she points to the church and its rituals as the culpable party in her failed marriages and crippling depression. According to her, the temple ceremony epitomizes a mindset so profoundly politically and morally incorrect that anyone could see it ought to be denounced.

However, the temple ceremony is more complex and has a more intricate and ancient history and meaning than Laake gives it credit for (see Paul and Margaret Toscano's *Strangers in Paradox*, Signature Press, 1991, for one interpretation, and Elisabeth Haich's *Initiation*, Seed Center, 1974, for a non-LDS commentary on the meaning and value of ancient temple ceremonies. A relevant passage from Haich is worth quoting:

"I want to be initiated!"

Father becomes very earnest. "Ask for something else, child," he says. "You are still very young and not yet mature enough to receive initiation. Tender young sprouts must not be exposed to hot sunshine; otherwise they burn up and can never blossom. Wait till you've acquired the necessary experiences in earthly, physical life. To be initiated now would make your later problems much, much harder to solve. Why cause yourself unnecessary troubles?"

It's unfortunate that this wise counsel wasn't given Laake when she was nineteen, and that it all too often isn't in Mormondom).

Laake justifies the fourteen-page description of an event that seemed to her ludicrous by saying "The phenomenon of a conditioned people that believes what it is told, and that sometimes justifies actions beyond the limits of decency set by most of the rest of the world, was still hidden

away within temples where I was being asked as a matter of course to protect [secret signs] with my life." She forgets that "actions beyond the limits of decency" are performed and justified by people every day, everywhere, Christian and Muslim, Mormon and atheist, and that the Mormon temple ceremony is not the inciting influence behind such actions. It cannot stop them. It can't even stop Laake from doing what seems to those of us who still find peace in the temple a pretty "indecent" act in itself—describing the initiatory words and actions of the temple. Initiation into the meanings of myths and symbols is a sacred event, and has been as long as human beings have recognized powers beyond their own. That Laake admits "the enormity of [her] lack of preparation and passion" is to her credit; that she implies that the temple is a den of shallowness and strangeness, and proceeds to reveal what she covenanted not to, is not.

Regrettably, because she has done so many readers for whom this book might contain some valuable reflection will not get Laake's insights about the grievous consequences of buying into any set of rules and philosophies that declare themselves impervious to questioning. Her handling of this delicate material is the worst kind of what I'll call "consumer journalism"—that is, if you tell 'em what they think they're dying to hear, you can sell 'em your book. The irony is that now Laake probably *won't* sell her book to those who might benefit most from it—Mormon women who might have the same kinds of experiences she had.

Laake is a prize-winning journalist in Phoenix, where, according to the book jacket, she "chronicles crime and politics and the politics of crime" for a newsmagazine of which she is an executive managing editor. Her story begins in 1970, when she was eighteen, a freshman at Brigham Young University, in love with her Sunday School teacher:

What a prig he was. I loved him completely. I think there's no real advantage to young love. On the Sunday morning when [he] finally approached me . . . I wasn't old enough to know that controlling the spread of disbelief across my face might have provided me with a certain amount of emotional leverage . . . I may actually have begun to inhale through my mouth (16).

In the following chapters, she describes how completely, how absolutely, she subscribed to the dogma that "if [she] failed to marry a faithful Mormon man in a ceremony performed in a Mormon temple, [she] would be denied access to the highest level of Mormon heaven" (17). So absolute is her compliance that she can see no male as anything but possible marriage material, and when a nice but dull boyfriend (not the Sunday School teacher, who rejects her for not being spiritual enough—for wanting to "*touch too much*") asks her to marry him, she agrees with his suggestion that they pray about it:

I sent Monty off to pray and didn't pray myself, partly because I assumed without praying that we weren't meant to be together, and also because I didn't feel very powerful. I believed that because I was a woman I shouldn't take any initiative. I also believed I shouldn't *have* to take any. If I'd been thinking clearly, I'd have realized it was a dangerous move . . . It didn't occur to me that a righteous priesthood holder would use the sacred tradition of revelation toward his own ends (58, 60).

All of this is all too familiar to Mormon readers. This kind of childish behavior among young adult men and women is undeniably ghastly—not the intention to seek wisdom in partner-choosing, but the inattention to their own levels of honesty and self-disclosure. So are the ridiculous sexual machinations Laake went through to remain "chaste" before her marriage, the intimate details of her hysteria when she realized what she'd gotten herself into, and the pitiful manipulations she had to endure after her divorce.

I think it's too bad that her advisors, of which she says there were many, did not advise her to leave those ceremonial descriptions out. The title could have been kept—she describes a number of other fairly typical Mormon interactions which could, if the term were stretched, be called ceremonies, and which were, if accuracy matters here, far more direct causes of her misery than the temple: men making decisions for women; women allowing them to do so; women giving up their power and their joy in themselves to be “wives and mothers in Zion” before they even know what it means to be who they are; ecclesiastical leaders taking authority in areas of people's lives where they have no business. These are more common than anyone with any sense would like to believe, almost always accompanied by the complicity of those who do not prepare intelligently, and always deplorable.

But they are not universal. The picture Laake paints of “voodoo” (her word) and impotent authority, of “a traditional Mormon life” as something “that occurs only on the surface, where denial of fears and doubts is possible,” is as thin and unidimensional as her eighteen-year-old perceptions ever were.

Granted, her account of what she learned from the people in the Psychiatric Institute of Washington D.C. is moving and poignant. But this book is as much about prolonged adolescent naivete as about anything else, and though there is plenty of that in Mormondom, there is also plenty outside of Mormondom and plenty of its opposite, mature wisdom and right action, within Mormondom. A bright and sensual woman who refuses to listen to her own experience, her own feelings, until she is thirty, through as many relationships as Laake had, surely has some responsibility for her own despair. It's to Laake's small credit that, occasionally and in a very quiet voice, she admits this.

I will say that I very much liked Chapter Eight and the Epilogue, not just because she describes events among the intelligentsia and feminists

of the Salt Lake of the 1980s and 90s that I know very well and am myself involved with. In these final sections of the book, finally, her experiences teach her something; here, finally, she learns that life is complex, rich, mysterious, to be welcomed. She gives us characters—not Mormons, but psychiatric cases—whose lives touch hers, whose suffering seems purposeful somehow. That she never saw any of her Mormon acquaintances as complex, round, struggling characters is a function as much of her own immaturity at the time of her knowing them as it is a function of Mormon dogma or “ceremony.” A growing body of Mormon literature, which began with Virginia Sorenson and Maurine Whipple and includes Wallace Stegner, Walter Kirn, Phyllis Barber, Margaret Young, and many others, shows that Mormonism carries the seeds of much literary richness and depth in it. The 1991 Pulitzer Prize for history was won, in fact, by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, a Mormon woman. My point is that “Mormonness” is not synonymous with “superficiality.” As the new physics puts it, the observer radically determines what is observed.

That there is a large body of Mormons who ask strong questions and support each other in the asking, and that Laake knows about them and writes of them in her epilogue, is a pleasure. That she has “grown up” is clear; the last sections of the book are exactly what the jacket calls them, “a triumphant act of self-affirmation.” However, many of the people who might most benefit from her book will choose not to read it now because she has treated lightly the most sacred of rituals, and my sense is that that choice on her part is not “triumphant” but a sham. What is otherwise a sometimes well-written, sometimes titillating story becomes sensationalism. The discerning reader is well served to be warned.